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EGYPTIAN ART

BY

WILHELM WORRINGER

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

EDITED WITH A PREFACE BY

BERNARD RACKHAM

(*Containing the Original Illustrations*)

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PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR

In this work Professor Worringer approaches a familiar subject from a new and unfamiliar angle. Since the time of Napoleon's campaign and the interest aroused by the explorations conducted by his command, a glamour as of something surpassing beyond measure, in grandeur and aloofness, any other of the visible works of man, has been cast upon the art of Ancient Egypt. The frame of mind in which this art has habitually been contemplated is tainted with the romantic wonder that belongs to all things very ancient or distant; this attitude is indeed not very different, as Professor Worringer points out, from the earlier traditional attitude towards Egypt, inherited from classical antiquity—one of superstitious veneration for something mysterious, magical, and almost superhuman. Nor have the events attending quite recent discoveries, with their appeal to the popular appetite for the sensational, by any means diminished the atmosphere of unreality by which, for the world at large, the early ages of Egyptian history are surrounded.

The work of Egyptologists during the last half century is a credit to the science of archaeology; it is all to the good, however, that their findings should be examined by one who has himself been *au-dessus de la mêlée*. Professor Worringer comes to his problem with a determination not to be blinded by the artificial glamour to which I have referred. He stands away from the bewildering mass of material which excavation has brought so lavishly to light, and seeks to discover the mind of the people by whom these things were made. In his earlier books he has enquired into the spiritual foundations underlying that art of the North which, by an extension of the usual application of the term, he calls by the name of Gothic; in the present work he approaches by the same avenue the problems of form presented by the earlier and widely different art of Ancient Egypt. He is well aware that in so doing he is exposing himself to attack from those who have spent their lives in a detailed study of its phenomena. But if in some particulars he may be found to be mistaken in his conclusions, it is well he should have given voice to his criticisms. They will need to be taken into account by all who in future

seek to estimate the place of Egypt in the general history of human culture. And this essay has a much wider bearing than that of its relevance to the Egyptian problem; Egypt serves here as a typical case for the general consideration of the psychological determination of form in art.

A word may be said as to the technique of translation in relation to the present work. All who can read the German will appreciate the colour and vitality of the original text, qualities partly inherent in the idiom of the language in which it is written. To preserve them in an equivalent English rendering has been no easy matter. Here and there the attempt has been abandoned, and a few such phrases as " will to formation " and " will to stone " have been retained in the hope that their strangeness may meet with the indulgence of the English reader.

I wish to thank my friends, Mr. W. B. Honey and Mr. Herbert Read, for reading the proofs and giving me many helpful suggestions.

B. R.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The English edition of my book gives me a welcome opportunity of making some explanatory remarks of which the necessity became clear when it was brought home to me that the German edition had called forth on all sides all kinds of misunderstandings. These are connected chiefly with the comparison with America. To begin with, this comparison has been taken *too* literally, as if I had really asserted that Ancient Egypt and Modern America were in all details alike and commensurable. Such a generalization, historically absurd and undifferentiating, was of course far from my intentions. What in fact I did was only to indicate that when all the obvious dissimilarities of the historical circumstances have been taken into account, there still remains in certain respects a structural similarity in the sociological conditions which explains also certain similarities undoubtedly observable in the manner in which art forms are attained. America is here for me only an example quoted academically of a special sociological situation which we wrongly hold to be possible only under present-day circumstances, and which in its fundamental lines was actually already existent, as I think, in many an ancient culture, not only, therefore, in Egyptian culture, though found there, of course, in a peculiarly striking and acute form. Thus Egypt is for me only the most accessible point, specially favourable in its typical clarity, from which to throw an entirely new light on the problem of the development in itself, viewed sociologically, of art forms. To the category of formation which has there presented itself to me as a distinctive type of artistic attitude, a type under certain circumstances of universal validity, I give the name Americanism, after the example most closely familiar to us. Anyone understanding the comparison otherwise than with this categorical limitation will have no difficulty in reducing my arguments to an absurdity.

For a further misunderstanding I am myself to blame. This relates to an accentuation of value which I give to this Americanism of form. I admit that in the context of my arguments this accent of value is seen only in its negative aspect. But that is the consequence of a definite context, and holds good only in that context. I must explain this. My

work is a polemic against a false view of Egypt. I take my stand against the traditional apotheosis of Egyptian profundity in all things, artistic included, and say: " What you regard as the ultimate metaphysic of form is *merely* the Americanism which otherwise you so much despise." In saying this I am admittedly speaking in the arrogant language innate in the European, who has nothing but a *merely* left for all things that do not fit into his traditional conceptions of value. This one-sidedness of the European outlook is, in my book also, a defect of which I am thoroughly aware; but it is excused by the fact that I am speaking in the first instance to Europeans and have to tear off from Egypt a mask given to it in fact by the romanticizing tendency of Europe. If behind the romantic mask I point out America, the unromantic, a " merely " forces itself all too easily upon my lips in this connection. But when this negative business of unmasking has been done and European prejudices have been combated with European means, perhaps the true problem of valuation will begin. This is what I mean: when it has been granted me that Egypt has nothing to do with all that has been put into it by Western tradition, but is actually only America, we may then begin to discuss the question whether this " merely " is justified and whether Egypt does not remain great " even if it is merely America." Such a discussion, however, could only be conducted with those who feel with me that to-day there is present in the atmosphere of Europe an intensive experience of life which produces a disposition to give to the tokens of value of cultural and artistic Americanism an unexpected colouring of positiveness. To-day we no longer see " Europe " but " the World." And we see also what is called " world style "; and begin to suspect that neither to-day nor in ancient times is a world style possible which does not contain a large share of what we with our limited European outlook have hitherto in our superior manner dismissed as Americanism. Things are not quite so simple in their significance as values as we in our Europeanism dreamed. This, however, is too wide a sphere for discussion. I merely wish to hint that I am aware of its existence. . . .

But enough of foreword! Now only a word of hearty thanks to him who, without losing heart, has puzzled over this German, which even for Germans is not altogether easy. I feel myself deeply in his debt.

WILHELM WORRINGER.

1. PORTRAIT OF A KING
Thebes. XIX Dynasty

I

The picture presented by anthropological and ethnological research into the population of Ancient Egypt is for the present no more than a series of notes of interrogation. Nothing has been definitely established beyond the fact that this Hamitic people, which has shown for seven thousand years in its character as a people a quite peculiar quality of consistency, was already at the moment of its appearance upon the scene of history a mixed product made up of the most heterogeneous constituents. Even the primitive pre-dynastic population, of which traces can be found all the time beneath the surface of Egypt as historically conceived, seems to display the widest variety of ethnic colouring. This is attested by finds of prehistoric skeletons on Egyptian soil.[1] It is remarkable that even in this earliest period a Northern element—Aryan or Indo-Germanic—may be inferred from these finds. Further, there arises for discussion the relationship of Egypt in the earliest times with the palaeolithic and neolithic culture of Northern and Western Europe. Indeed, scientific research continually gives more substantial shape to the picture of a cultural connection of high value in the Stone Age extending with a movement from West to East from the South of France and Spain through North Africa and the Northern Sahara region as far as the Nile district and beyond.[2] Again, we have the counter-movement westwards in the form of Semitization—to be traced in the formation of language—to which too early a date cannot be assigned, even though it attained a decisive conclusion only through later impacts. There is further the Negro question! As a rule the intrusion of Negro elements is taken into account from about the 4th Dynasty onwards,[3] yet recent opinion holds that any strong direct contact between Egypt and the Negroes first came about only with the New Kingdom.[4] The most recent anthropology, however, gives an affirmative answer to the question whether the Negroes had not once before reached the Mediterranean under quite other prehistoric geological conditions.[5] However this may be, direct *Egyptian* evidence of this has not yet been found.

All these details of prehistory have yet to be cleared up. The fact

remains that Egypt as historically comprehensible to us is anything but a unified and autochthonous product; it is rather a region of deposits composed of ethnic elements from all points of the compass. On the other hand we have the fact—and this is the starting-point of the real Egyptian problem—that Egypt, in spite of this differentiated character of its rise and composition in prehistoric times, presents itself at the outset as a type with a stamp of its own, both physical and cultural, relatively pure and markedly distinct from its immediate neighbours, and has developed upon the foundation of this homogeneity of type a consistency in the character of its people which has few parallels in history.

Anyone therefore who thinks he can attain an understanding of the limitations of the Egyptian racial type from the findings of anthropological and ethnological research will meet with disillusionment. Even such absolutely certain facts as can be deduced from scientific literature will be for him, to quite a remarkable extent, irrelevant to the phenomenon of Egypt as a whole. But it may be that this very irrelevance puts in his hands the key to an understanding. Let me indicate how this is meant.

Peoples that have grown up in a state of nature are to a certain extent comprehensible also along the lines of natural history. However differentiated historically the process of their natural growth may be, it is capable, with the help of anthropology, ethnology, the science of language, archaeology, and other specialized sciences, of being read in an approximately historical manner. That the natural history of such a people should be potentially capable of study will at all events be merely a question of perfecting these means or of extending our knowledge of facts as the result of new discoveries.

In the case of the Egyptian people we have the feeling that such possibilities of study do not exist, even though we have more detailed information about them than about any other of the peoples of antiquity. What is the consequence of this? That the Egyptians as a historical phenomenon stand somehow beyond the conditions of natural growth—in other words, that they are an artificial product or, better, a product of the artificiality of special circumstances of culture or civilization, and that these circumstances have given them their decisive essential character in so large a measure that the question of the native soil of their *natural* conditions of origin remains altogether irrelevant. Egypt is a

colony upon an artificial soil and has the cultural form peculiar to such a colony.

" The relationship of a cultute to the soil is the condition or the explanation of the essence of that culture. Culture is the soil rendered organic by man." This is the formula of Frobenius. In this earth-born sense Egypt has no culture; but it has a civilization.

Makrizi, an Arab writer of the Middle Ages, has handed down to us an Egyptian proverb: " He who drinks Nile water, if he is a foreigner, forgets his fatherland." It would be a mistake to interpret this saying as meaning that Egypt is another Capua, acting like an Oriental narcotic upon all the powers of memory. Egypt is anything but a part of the Orient in this effeminate and romantic sense. No, this proverb merely asserts the fact of experience that a people forfeited all its natural spontaneity of growth when it entered the atmosphere of this levelling Egyptian artificialization of existence. It does not mean that it lost its power of action, as in some Capuan or Oriental climate; it merely came in quite a definite sense to have no fatherland, or to be above the limitations of a fatherland—that is to say, it freed itself from the conditions of its natural growth to become participant in an existence which was above natural history, above history even. The striking constancy of character of the Egyptian people has always been remarked upon. This is its explanation: it is not a constancy of blood or race or of a peculiar formation of ethnographical type; it is a constancy in that levelling power of transformation inherent in the conditions of existence peculiar to Egypt. This fact may perhaps best be made clear by a comparison: Egypt in certain respects plays in antiquity the part played in modern times by America. The *tertium comparationis* is just that power of transformation of a non-indigenous culture which, because of this very lack of natural indigenous restrictions, very quickly breeds a unified artificial type that after a few generations gives proof of its assimilating power even in the sphere of physical characteristics.

We must face the fact that Egypt is a quite narrow, long strip of land between two deserts in order to understand that in a hothouse of such limited extent, offering the most favourable conditions for acclimatization, such an inordinate upward forcing of culture, or rather of civilization, *could not fail* to result. The limited possibilities of expansion in actual

physical extent of necessity compelled upward growth to an artificial height. Life concentrated in a narrow oasis immediately takes on the over-cultured form belonging to growth in a forcing-house. Egypt is the greatest instance of the oasis in the history of the world. The Mesopotamian region, which alone can be compared with it, is developed on a much wider basis, and was not so sharply defined as to have forced upon it such an upward growth of culture within the narrowest limits.

Let us however indicate, by quoting a weighty passage from Frobenius,[6] what we mean in this connection by oasis. He says: "With the word 'oasis' we part from the original essential quality of Hamitic culture. A higher foreign element appears. The oasis is not an original feature of the Hamitic cultural region. It is something grafted upon the growth of Hamitic life. The Hamites withdrew themselves into steppes and deserts because these alone are adequate to their original idea of life, making impossible that higher culture which is foreign to them. The oasis, however, a type of territory which has only come into being in comparatively recent times, has the property of allowing the adoption of alien and higher forms of culture and of appropriating them by absorption." The fundamental idea of my conception of Egyptian culture could not possibly be stated more strongly than by these remarks of Frobenius (at first unknown to me), as to the alien character of the oasis culture as contrasted with the soil from which the Hamite conception of life was a natural outgrowth.

The artificial upward growth of Egyptian culture is, however, only half explained by limitation of space. Something else has also to be taken into consideration.

Egypt is a fertile country, but the conditions of its fertility are not such that man forthwith becomes in it a parasite living on the fruits of its natural wealth. In itself rather, Egypt is infertile. Glowing sun and perpetual drought prevent it from attaining the formation of humus. In a desert tract so devoid of rain certain possibilities of cultivation are, it is true, afforded by the river-water of the Nile, but they are confined within narrow limits. Egypt is converted into a land of culture of the first rank only by the inundations of the Nile, that is to say, by a process which is in itself rather of a destructive nature and is turned into a blessing to the country only through its skilful exploitation by man. It is moreover

2. FUNERAL FEAST
Musée Guimet, Paris. XII Dynasty

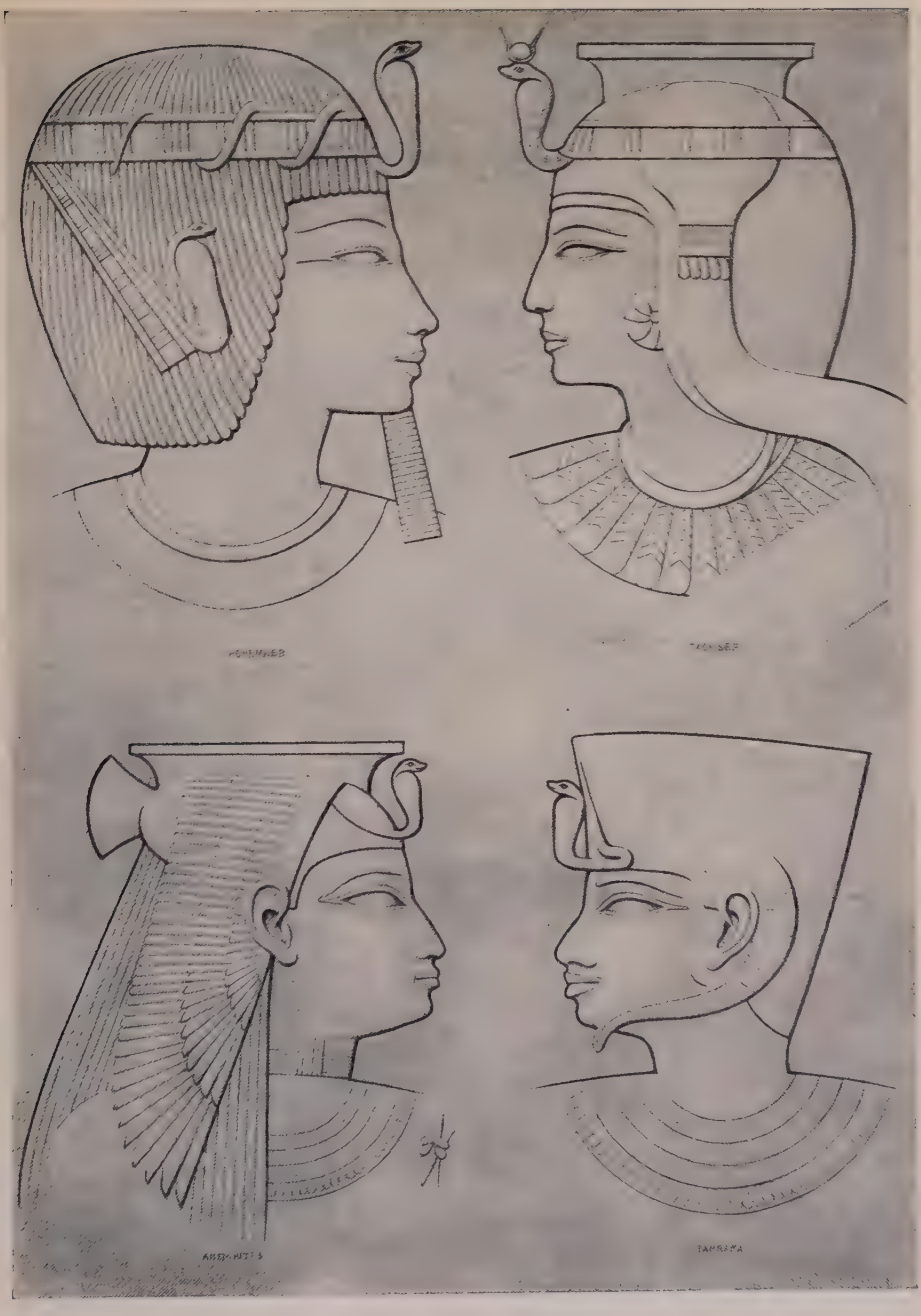
characteristic that the most valuable contribution to the formation of the soil of Egypt was brought in from without: in the black Nile mud which is left behind upon broad stretches of the river banks when the stream has withdrawn itself into its bed, the most important requisite for fertility is provided by the fine boulder-sand which the mountain becks of the Abyssinian highland contribute to the Nile as it dashes down the cataracts.[7]

The Egyptian converts the catastrophic phenomenon of the inundations into an element of the highest fertility in just the same manner as a modern motor-engineer utilizes explosions so as to convert them by clever calculation into highly advantageous power-producers. In both instances the decisive fact is the control of natural forces which are in their origin destructive. The situation thus created is quite other than that of a convenient appropriation of the fruits of tropical luxuriance. Hydrometers, canals, dykes, and dams had to be devised by an ant-like intelligence in order to transform the destructive power of the elements into a utilitarian process of civilization. Egyptian fertility is unthinkable apart from a high state of technical development. Clever human calculation outwits the destructive urge of nature. Thus it is true also of the cultivation of the soil in Egypt, that it is not a natural growth but introduced by means of an artificial superstructure upon the provisions of nature. To some extent this holds good of every more advanced culture of the soil, but in this case of Egypt the tension between nature and its artificial utilization is high beyond all comparison. It is hardly exalting to see how ant-like industry evolves a finely woven carpet of fertile fields out of the consequences of a catastrophe of nature. One might almost speak of the process of domestication of the elemental forces, and it is a petty kind of joy we feel in this triumph of human intelligence. The nature of Egyptian culture may, however, be shown by the following image: a natural force breaks in cataracts upon a plain and what remains is a finely regulated system for the production of profit to humanity. Extreme artificiality triumphs over the immediacy of nature. It is a Philistine victory, with nothing heroic about it. " In the oasis of the Sahara culture reaches its zenith at the moment at which the struggle is taken up with natural forces inimical to culture, and becomes senile when it has won the victory." [8]

We have already asked how it is that any enquiry into the natural history of the Egyptian is in vain. This is the answer to the question: Because the whole of existence is embroidered over with a system of artificially introduced benefits to life, in the rarefied air of which natural growth is no longer adequate. The men of this culture live no longer by their blood but by their circumstances. These circumstances, such as we have already set forth, constitute an exceptional case in the history of the world. The Egyptian himself is also an exception. And as these circumstances remain constant, so does the Egyptian also; he stands as an artificial product beyond the sphere of transformations determined by nature. May we not perhaps find here also an explanation of his naive optimism in the matter of immortality, which indeed argues with an obviousness amounting—in its suspicious freedom from every deeper metaphysical uncertainty—rather to a belief in duration than to a belief in immortality?

The fact that, by virtue of the special circumstances of the upward growth of his civilization, the Egyptian grew into a stratum which makes it impossible to measure him by the same standard as his neighbours near and far, is most clearly reflected in the hesitation we feel in applying to him the term "Oriental." To be sure, the Egyptian has Oriental qualities, but the sum of his qualities nevertheless yields something which by no means coincides with the idea of Orientalism. He is not non-Oriental but super-Oriental. For he exceeds his Oriental nature precisely to the same extent as he exceeds nature in general, being an artificial product of circumstances. The calculating power of action to which he was constrained if he was to make his country fertile by mastering the catastrophes of nature, alienates him from the essential idea of the Oriental, namely, passivity. Force of circumstances de-orientalized him in this respect. Power of action is a masculine term, passivity a feminine. Egyptian culture, though its hidden basic organization, like that of all North African Hamite cultures, is matriarchal,[9] is masculine through and through—in a sense, however, without the least tinge of the heroic and primordial. It is a safer and matter-of-fact kind of masculinity which knows only the *compulsion* and not the *pleasure* of enterprise, and does not go one step beyond the dictates of utility.

There is also a form of masculinity which is merely a correlative of the technicalization of life, and which comes about automatically when a



3. HEADS OF KINGS

certain distance has been traversed from dependence on nature. This is the Egyptian type. America again presents itself for comparison. It is correct of the American case as well as the Egyptian to say that this type of masculine development is connected with a high regard for women and the family. Indeed, there is in both a tendency to find compensation to an exaggerated degree in the life of the home for the compulsory masculinity of public life.

Every observer of Egyptian culture has remarked that by Oriental standards sex plays an absolutely insignificant part in it. This also is merely an indication of the estrangement from nature involved by the forcing process of civilization. Every culture which keeps close to nature is permeated with eroticism; a culture diluted by civilization, however, loses touch with this cosmic native soil and only sexuality is left to it. Thus we find obscenities on the borders of Egyptian culture but no Eros in its midst.

Civilization means, in contrast to culture, the victory of life-preserving over life-squandering tendencies. This is why even a Strabo was already struck by the unwarlike character of the Egyptian people. Military organizations are present, but no soldierly spirit. Wars are for the most part waged through the agency of mercenaries. Such a transient flaring-up of a warlike spirit as occurred at the beginning of the New Kingdom remains only an episode. The exponent of Egyptian ideas of life is not the soldier but the scribe. " It is a misfortune to become a soldier . . . for welfare consists only in attention to books by day and reading at night." [10] This one-sided estimation of learning which stands in the foreground of Egyptian ideology shows more clearly than anything else an etiolation in ideals of utility. The result is that there is such a thing as Egyptian science, certainly, but not Egyptian culture, in our sense of the term. The erudition of the Egyptians is a mastery of formulas, but not an urge to learning with a theoretical purpose of its own. Learning, whether mathematical or medical, stops short at the point at which its practical usefulness comes to an end. There remains merely a technique of immediate practical achievement of utility, no endeavour to attain knowledge free from ulterior motive. Even Egyptian science is devoid of Eros. This technical view of science can, of course, lead to a superficial completeness, but certainly not to any inner perfection; it is no accident

that it was precisely on Egyptian soil that Greek culture became Alexandrianism.

In Egyptian literature also we find reflected the thin-blooded ideology of a control of existence purely in the direction of civilization. So-called doctrines of wisdom are placed in the foreground. Such a designation as this was certainly never more unjustified, for it is merely a matter of doctrines of cleverness and, what is more, of cleverness of a very opportunist character; we find no theories of moral well-being for its own sake, but instructions for a practical conduct of life which will secure success and progress. An outward technique of well-being is taught instead of inward morality, in short, utilitarianism and pragmatism instead of ethics. And here also form is outweighed by formula; often the whole business is nothing more than a mere doctrine of respectability. This highly elaborate technique of conventional good behaviour also reminds us sociologically of America.

And what of the religious literature, the great texts of the Pyramids? Here at last shall we be able to detect the mighty breathing of a deeper feeling for life? The hope is delusive. Even these rituals of sacrifice and phrases of incantation are only doctrines of practical wisdom as to conduct after death. And they also constitute a technique worked out with the utmost refinement with the object of assuring for the dead his welfare beyond the grave.[11] Here again practical utility is the essential idea of all spiritual effort.

It must first be stated that this artificial people has no great epic, no song of heroic life. Has it no Homeric hymns, no Gilgamish epic, no song of the Nibelungs? It has instead books of etiquette, as well as sentimental lyrics and a literature of diversion. Stories of adventure and fairy tales satisfy a craving for sensation for which there is no room in the practical conduct of a soberly ordered life. This literature is, as it were, nothing but ornamental gardens and conservatories of fancy laid out to induce in moments of relaxation forgetfulness of the fact that life is being lived in an artificially converted desert.

" Like Egyptian literature, the Egyptian language shows that in this body of writings the dominant spirit is not the same as in those of the other ancient peoples of the East. At all events the brutal power and the religious fervour of Assyrian and Hebrew poetry are lacking in Egyptian

4. THE SKY-GODDESS NUT
XXVI Dynasty

poetry. The human element and the feeling for life in Egypt and elsewhere are too widely different for any correspondence in this sphere." [12]

In a critical examination of Egyptian culture special emphasis will be given to the observation that the Egyptian knows no myth of the downfall of the world.[13] What is the meaning of this fact? It means that in this artificial construction of civilized existence the feeling for the ultimate tension of all being has been lost. For it is excessive vital tension which disburdens itself in visions of decline. Such lack of definition in the feeling for life is unknown to the artificially cultured Egyptian. He explains life in perpetuity to accord with his feelings. Through the stability of his organizations, that is, of the superstructure artificially imposed upon the natural foundation, he lost the feeling for the dynamic quality of all natural events. World-decline means world-renovation. In the Egyptian system there is no room for this death and rebirth of the world. Whereas primeval power of myth-creation carries every ascending line of life right up to the point at which decline sets in, the time-feeling of civilization runs its course in a line of infinity from which fate is absent. Ask America whether it knows feelings of decline. In this connection the fact is relevant that the idea of a migration of the soul in the sense of a purification is also foreign to Egypt. Even its form of immortality is that of being and not of becoming.

Timelessness is fatelessness. Egypt—in this again resembling America—has an outward history but not an inward. It knows events only, not strokes of fate. For this reason it produced only a system of annals, not a historical literature. It registered with precision its external history, but myths as the vital echo of an inner history are lacking. Such an echo is present only where an immanent consciousness of development gives a form-impulse to feeling for history. But even such a conception of *development* belongs to a sphere too natural to be capable amid the artificial structure of Egyptian life of producing the power which creates historical myths.

The idea of personality also belongs to this over-natural sphere of existence. The consequence is that lack of biographical sense which is characteristic of the history of the Egyptian gods and kings.[14] "Most of the Egyptian gods are bloodless figures without any special distinguishing attributes, differing only in name and exterior." [15]

The refinement which the idea of fate undergoes in artificial civilized existence we call conventionalism. Conventional is not the same thing as typical. The latter is super-personal, the former non-personal. Conformity to a type is a compulsion of form, conventionalization a compulsion of formula. The whole of Egyptian life, so far as evidence of it remains for our observation, has the effect of being stereotyped in convention and formulation. Every conventionalism, however, is also conservatism. In this sense there has never been a more conservative people than the Egyptians, but this conservatism again is a belief in consistency, nothing else but the necessary outcome of an absence of inner fate, of inner history and inner development. It is thus an unescapable petrifaction-form of social life, which cannot fail to result when through civilized hothouse culture the freezing-point of individual immediateness has been passed. We were speaking of the fateless outlook upon infinity in which civilization's feeling for time becomes stereotyped. Now when this outlook is transferred from the future to the past, the result is what we call Egyptian conservatism. There are, of course, also other and higher forms of conservatism, but in all our construction of terms we constantly find ourselves under the necessity of including under a single word, merely because of external similarity of structure, things which are essentially different in nature. Only under these circumstances, for example, could it have come to pass that this fateless infinite outlook upon the future found amongst the Egyptians should be likened to a longing for eternity of a metaphysical kind. To the Egyptians eternity was no word of terror, but only a cold matter of fact relating to their feeling for time which had become quite devoid of tension. "Among the Egyptians, as we have said already, a childishly naive confidence is characteristic in their conception of death. It was taken for granted that the dead continued to exist and in a manner similar to the living, only in more exalted forms." [16] "This religiosity felt no thirst for the beyond. Prayers were addressed to the daemon of the place, sacrifices were made to him, his festival was celebrated and his sacred beast protected—all in order to induce in him a favourable mood for the sake of very real advantages. Ethical ideas have here no place. There is not anywhere a suggestion even of the presentiment that this life beyond the grave is actually the only true, better, higher life. This continual existence was rather thought of solely

5. TOMB OF RAMESES VI
Thebes

as an extension of earthly being. The sentiments and endeavours of the old Egyptians were out and out those of worldly joy." [17]

This is borne out by the history of language: " The Egyptian whose attention is directed entirely to this world is determined not to die and —apart from occasional pessimistic utterances in a different tone— hopes at least to be able to carry on his earthly existence in the beyond. He therefore painfully avoids speaking of death at all, and believes that he can, as it were, put a charm on life with a word by speaking of the realm of the dead as the land of life in which he goes to his rest alive. The same people that made provision of unparalleled splendour for its dead and absolutely could not do enough for itself in this direction, almost entirely avoids speaking of death and the phenomena which accompany and follow after it. Everything connected with dying, being dead, the grave, and the realm of the dead, is held to be offensive, and is circumvented in writing by means of pictorial expressions of a markedly euphemistic nature." [18] And this people, to whom death is a painful, offensive occurrence, has been called " the classic land of immortality!"

This brings us to the crucial question of all Egyptian culture, namely, the question of the value of that Egyptian religion over which tradition has cast so great and—let us say at once—in our opinion so unjustified a halo. Can it be assumed even for a single moment that a people which in all other expressions of its cultural existence held so far aloof from the exploitation of all forms of natural impulse, kept alive in itself religious impulses of great creative style? Can the Egyptian, so thin-blooded in every other cultural relationship, have been for once, in his religion, full-blooded? The question answers itself in the negative. But the question how this idea can ever have arisen requires an answer.

Up to this point in our exposition we have purposely laid bare only *one* side of Egyptian culture. Our entire aim was first and foremost to work out the civilized and artificialized character of this culture, its divorce from nature—the culture of a colony of mixed races, foredoomed by the special conditions of its existence to become stereotyped as a hothouse growth of artificial conventions, a forced product of civilized life maintaining its formative impulse out of the rationality of institutions and not out of the irrationality and individuality of their exponents. It is always said that the Egyptian is in a special degree conditioned by the

nature of his country; but this is not the case; he is conditioned by the organizations forced upon him if he is to extract from the special natural circumstances of Egypt a maximum of productiveness. And this maximum is forced upon him because immediately alongside the strips of oasis yawns the desert. Thus the possibilities of cultivating the remaining strips had to be exploited to the utmost extent on rational lines; and this can only be done by artificial cultivation. And so—to repeat this fundamental motive—we have no surrender to nature, but its technical subjugation.

How is it that this one-sided artificiality of the Egyptian type of living has been so little recognized? It is because all its cultural conventions are based upon conceptions which so far from being stamped with the thin-blooded artificiality of civilization are in fact of an altogether pure and unadulterated natural growth, to the point of being elementary. One need only mention the chief witness to this fact—this supercultivated people built up its religious culture on animal worship as primitive as it was elementary. This paradox provides the key to the Egyptian problem.

Let us bring forward first a significant geological consideration. Apart from the Nile, Egypt is a desert with a bare surface soil and, breaking through it here and there, a lifeless rocky framework. This desert, however, has a primeval history. Before the last interglacial period its geological conditions were altogether different; it was a land of wildernesses and swamps. A fundamental stratum of such bygone memories survives also in that later Egypt, the Egypt of the cultivated desert, which built up for itself its highly developed existence, civilized and estranged from nature, on the narrow foundation of the Nile oasis.

Colonizing peoples, that is to say, artificial peoples, have no power of myth-creation; but beneath the artificial element in the population of historic Egypt there lies, like a geological substratum, a buried layer of primeval population. This layer becomes the forcing soil which nourishes the religious impotence of the upper stratum. Residues of primitive religious luxuriance are interpreted by a colonial culture incapable of self-generation as an unproblematical, sacrosanct apriori. Civilization is powerless to do anything better than to enclose, like a sanctuary for wild life, a reserve for the rudiments of religion. Theology becomes the technique of conserving the mouldering remnants of primitiveness.

In this state of things it is, of course, inevitable that the religious components of this artificial museum-culture should change their essential complexion; necessities of aboriginal belief are turned into a system of superstition. Elemental features are trimmed and trivialized into formulas. Fetishism is theologically domesticated. And this is true not only of those components of faith which crop up out of the parent soil of primitive population in the religious civilization of the Egyptian; it is true also of the multifarious alluvial beds of *Asiatic* world-religions which in the train of colonizing hordes were deposited in this greatest of all oases in the history of the world; and it is true no less of the influences which came from the *African* hinterland, such as Central Erythraea for example.[19] In all these adoptions one fact can be observed, that absolutely no attempt is made to incorporate these foreign bodies, otherwise than externally, with the indigenous religious sensibility. No attempt is made by organic amalgamation to bring about continued growth in combination; indeed, since a fertile indigenous religious sensibility is lacking, the foreign elements are only treated in a spirit of conservatism and ranged one beside another without any inward connection. " A mythology in which quite irreconcilable myths are quietly maintained side by side, a medley without a parallel. Even at a later date this chaos was never reduced to order; indeed, it only grew worse in the three thousand years through which Egyptian religion persisted after the period of the Pyramid texts." [20] This is all in accord with the character of Egyptian religion as a religious natural reservation in the religious fallow land of colonial civilization. Nor should we forget—one may reflect in passing—that it is no accident that the modern idea of protected natural parks originated in America.

Every living means for the development of religious thought is therefore wanting; no humus is left in this artificial soil for this natural power of religious growth. The spectator of the Egyptian pantheon finds himself set down in a religious museum in which numerous but heterogeneous religious treasures have been gathered together and are kept under the charge of priestly officials. The impression grows ever stronger that these officials are absolutely unwilling to take upon themselves the task of bringing these treasures into intelligent association with one another. They are satisfied with putting them in superficial proximity to one another, and find in this nothing whatever to take offence at; for they

have become too much estranged from the instinct for religious logic to be conscious of this obvious lack of coherence. All the more conscientiously and pedantically, however, do they watch over this state of external proximity. This is the technique of the curator. The cult of religious formulas takes the place of the cult of religious forms. The accidents of a heterogeneous transmission receive permanent definition by means of lifeless conventions. " Here we find the lack of system, the indifference to inner contradictions, which have set their stamp in other ways on the spiritual life of Egypt, and which make the whole religious sensibility of the people so difficult for modern man to understand." [21]

The fact is that every attempt of science to construct a coherent picture of the religious conceptions of Egypt from the monumental and literary evidences which have been handed down to us in such rich measure, has ended in failure; and the reason for this is precisely that such attempts have started from the false assumption of a uniformity. What trouble has been taken to clear up the contradictions in the conceptions of death, immortality, and resurrection—and all in vain! The relation between mummification of the body and belief in the soul set free from the body as the vehicle of personal immortality, remains just as much unexplained as the contradiction which permeates the various ideas of resurrection and the beyond in Egyptian theology. Dispositions to profound ideas are indeed present on every hand—the underlying soil of the primitive age is enough to insure that this should be so, as well as the deposits brought in from religious strata in distant foreign lands; but it is as if all these dispositions had been cut off at a certain point, reduced to a level and checked from mutual interpenetration. Thus the whole resembles a syncretism stereotyped in a ritual of formulas at the very point at which religious elaboration could not otherwise fail to have come about.

Nowhere can the remnants of the primeval religious soil be traced more clearly than in Egyptian sorcery. There above all is to be found a fundamental deposit of immemorial primitive ideas which originated in the pre-animistic depths of religious magic, and as such represents an elementary form of religious fecundity. It has something of the primitive fertility of the volumes of mud rolled down from the Abyssinian highlands into the Egyptian plain, which when once they have been deposited become a tract adapted for cultivation by refined methods of agriculture.

6. SARCOPHAGUS PAINTING FROM THEBES

In a similar manner this *magic* primitive fertility is also converted under Egyptian hands into the petty speculation of sorcerers. Primitive forces are domesticated into formulated everyday custom. Where can we find an Egyptian incantation-formula which does not sound hollow when struck? Only the shells of magic conceptions have been left, their potent content has disappeared. All the more is it an artificial and circumstantial system of externals which is compounded out of these empty shells. *Original* belief in sorcery may have a great metaphysical effectiveness; Egyptian sorcery is abstruse in its effect because it is without religious immediacy and replaces this lack with a rational and pedantic technique of formulas which externalizes in a vexatious manner the material of magic. Out of a belief in magic grows a superstitious belief in the technique of sorcery, out of piety, bigotry. Civilization's substitute for religion is occultism. In occultism there are ghosts and spectres, it is true, but there is no daemonology of great metaphysical style. How lacking is such a daemonology in Egypt also! [22]

To the sphere of civilization in Egypt, on the other hand, belongs the fact that all life is wrapped in an atmosphere of thin-blooded humanity. All the dark forces of primeval popular fantasy that could not strike root in this condition of humanity survive all the time as mere ghosts in a ribald but laboriously codified magic. It does not come from the centre of the creative will, because it does not derive from the centre of a living, potent world-feeling. It is rather only the substratum of past ages cropping out on the upper surface. Here again we find everywhere in parenthesis the word " America."

The religious impotence of historic Egypt is so openly apparent that the question must be asked again and again how did Egypt come to earn its halo of renown as a motherland of religious wisdom? The answer to this riddle is provided by the fascinating power of the senseless. Nothing has a more profound effect than paradox. The ancient discoverers of Egypt found themselves in the presence of a paradox of such vast dimensions. A land of outward culture of the utmost refinement, a land full of technical marvels, a land of thoroughly intellectualized and highly intelligent appearance, a land of absolute certainty and unity of style in all the expressions of its civilization and culture, a land exhibiting form in a state of clarity going back for thousands of years, a land infinitely proud

of its stereotyped culture—this side only of Egypt was seen. But this same country offered prayers to cats, dogs, and baboons, and gave to its Pharaoh, the equal of the gods, trappings which were distantly reminiscent of the chieftain of a half savage clan, and pointed back to times when a girdle and a kind of sheath or codpiece and the tail of an animal fastened on behind were the sole ornament of a king,[23] this same country put into the grave of its dead household gear, toys, amulets, viands and miniature cakes, and was unconscious of any greater anxiety than lest the dead should through lack of offerings be under the necessity of eating their own dung and drinking their own urine; [24] this same people knew of no philosophy, but went through the most sterile routine of soothsaying and dream-interpretation, and " the true Lord of the World was the sorcerer experienced in formulas, to whom everything had to make obeisance." [25] This was the other side of the aspect of Egypt as seen from without. The possibility that the highest sense of material culture could combine with the utmost senselessness of ideal culture had to be rejected as an untenable assumption. The only possible explanation remaining was that behind this apparent senselessness of the ideal culture there lay hidden a sense, in quite a peculiar manner deeper and more secret, withdrawing itself only from the sight of the stranger. *Credo quia absurdum.* " For a complete contradiction is as mysterious to the wise as to the foolish." Egypt became a wonderland of ultimate, most secret wisdom, a figure of Sais behind the veils of which the solution of all the riddles of the world lay hidden. " And this naive belief of the Graeco-Roman world endured for seventeen centuries. It is not long since anyone hearing of pyramids and obelisks felt rising in him all the dread of the profoundest mysteries, and an Egyptian sarcophagus with its grotesque figures of demons was looked upon with unfeigned veneration, whilst Rosicrucians and Freemasons surrounded themselves with Egyptian symbols. In these days in which *we* have learnt to know for ourselves the monuments of Egypt, and are able to study its inscriptions and literature, this glory is departed. Its wisdom proves on closer inspection to be a body of ideas partly of sensible sobriety, partly of a fantastic religious character." [26] It is, however, precisely in this abstruse blend of sobriety and fantasticality that the fascination lay. But what is it that we call religious *fantasticality*? It is a stereotyped religious *fancy* which has

7. BATTLE-SCENE FROM THEBES

Ramesseum. XIX Dynasty

forfeited its inner meaning and for that reason run wild. Religious fancy, however, is what the Egyptian, uprooted from natural conditions, did not possess; he could only adopt its material from without, and his own contribution to it in the way of a distinctive form was just that stereotyped, degenerate element which we call fantasticality. But as this fantasticality was not allowed to grow in wild luxuriance, but was parcelled out in the process of civilization by a sober theological speculation into neat systems of formulas, there arose a medley of profundity, nonsense, and intelligence which in this sphere stands by itself in the history of the world, and has again and again defied all cursory attempts to unveil it. And yet there is no recent investigation of a more serious order which does not end up with a recognition of the shallowness of Egyptian religion and theology. "Their religious knowledge hardly extends beyond a knowledge of confused collections of magic, ritual ceremonies, and observance of cult. Their treatment of theological questions was satisfied with syncretistic adjustments of the local cults indigenous in the Nile Valley with the religious doctrines concerning the great deities (frequently by means of an *etymological* play on words and by exegetic commentaries, sometimes forced, sometimes all too obvious, upon religious records), without achieving any great results in the process." [27]

Quite lately the revelation of the true facts of the case has again been jeopardized owing to a quite preposterous over-estimation of the El Amarna epoch in Egyptian history, which plays an altogether episodic part, and across which the true Egypt passed after a few decades to a complete restitution of the old order of the day. However intelligible it may be that modern sensibility should react to the figure of the great heretic king, brought into so clear a light by the excavations of the German Oriental Society, we must be very much on our guard against drawing from this highly interesting individual case generalizing conclusions as to the Egyptian intellectual attitude in its totality. This is not the place to describe the altogether peculiar historical conditions and foreign cultural influences under which the *intermezzo* of El Amarna developed; we must rather be satisfied with establishing the fact that all the expressions of this culture, be they religious, literary, or artistic, bear a stamp which shows them to be in the nature of foreign bodies in the general Egyptian complex. Indeed, this alien stamp is actually true in a literal

sense; that is to say, the figures themselves which confront us on the monuments of this culture show a refined, nervous, morbid type which seems to present, from the point of view of race-biology also, a problem apart. However this may be, here we have all at once the atmosphere of a hypertrophied nervous sensitiveness and of a quite un-Egyptian femininity to which modern sensibility reacts with all the warmth of understanding, taking it as the seductive starting-point for the approach to the Egyptian soul. A human heart is suddenly felt to be beating beneath the stiff Egyptian surface, and the fact is forgotten that the heart-beat is audible only under pathological conditions. The true Egypt, however, was not pathological, but soberly healthy.

We must here recall the fact that the ancient world also based its idea of Egypt upon an abnormal Egypt, namely, the late Egypt of Hellenistic and Roman times. This Egypt, which had already undergone the domination of Libyans, Nubians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, was indeed only a distorted reflection of the true, classical Egypt, and was able only through this cosmopolitan degeneracy of its later conditions to attain to that rôle of a worldwide fashion which at that time it began to play with the dissemination of its cults and exterior attributes. Thus it came about that the traditional estimate of Egyptian conditions was determined by nothing more nor less than the impression of Egypt in its later stages, an Egypt that had lost all character. A soil that has been torn up and laid waste brings forth once more weeds and wildings. The folk element again comes to the surface. There is now about Egypt something more or less orgiastic even. " The recession of the erotic element in the Nile valley comes to an end with the intrusion of the Greeks." [28]

The picture of the Egyptian race given in this chapter is certainly not free from one-sidedness and exaggerations, and it might certainly be possible to deduce from facts that have been handed down evidence against each assertion that has been made. This follows as a matter of course in dealing with a culture of multifarious formation lasting through thousands of years. It is merely a question of working out the dominant features, and thereby countering the unconscious falsification arising from historically limited isolated views. The history of the modern El Amarna fashion is the very thing that shows how great is the danger of a false estimation based on isolated facts. Every age sees in a

past culture that which it wishes to see because it speaks in kindred accents; and all the time the traditional glory of Egypt has so powerful an effect that after the disillusionments occasioned by scientific study every opportunity of rehabilitation is readily seized, even if it can be supported only by a single episode. It has its effect even in the manner of translating many literary documents. They are unintentionally endowed with a hymn-like rhythm which, as an unconscious falsification of the inner tonality, cannot help charming those who base their judgment upon a sober general view of the Egyptian spirit. Here it is really the tone which makes the music, and this tone, in many recent translations, very beautiful as poetry, seems to me to be untrue. Of the resonance and metrical qualities of Egyptian poetry we can, of course, get no idea from the Egyptian script, which has no vowels.[29] It will not do therefore to transfer to every material of another kind a hymn-like tone derived from a quite definite historical material, namely, the Hebrew, merely because such other material comes superficially within the definition of the hymn. In the rendering of Egyptian hymns it would be much better to introduce a style corresponding to the general stylistic character to be found in certain Egyptian monuments of art of an honorific nature. The accentual complexion of the translation would then take on an entirely different aspect, and the distance separating our sensibility from the Egyptian would be respected.

There is yet another typical instance of this unconscious obliteration of distance. Amongst the literary productions of the Middle Kingdom there is a very beautiful " Colloquy with his soul of one weary of life." [30] It is so fully charged with a tired scepticism and pessimistic resignation that we can listen with our modern ears to these broken accents of the life-feeling with complete accord of understanding, and feel ourselves instantly misled into the assumption, in consonance with our inherited conception of the profundity of the Egyptian feelings about life, that a worldly-wise pessimism is always the keynote of those feelings. The keynote is really something else. Let us listen to the words of an Egyptologist: " On the whole it may be said that the ancient Egyptians were a good-humoured, satisfied, light-hearted, self-contented people. Their chief endeavour was to secure as agreeable a material life as possible. Actual pessimism existed in the Nile valley only exceptionally." [31]

Except on occasions, how could a people so divorced from nature possibly be sceptical? Scepticism is absolutely out of keeping with their stratum of existence, in which underground life-tensions find relief in metaphysical sadness. Once again the word America suggests itself.

Universal feeling, cosmic sense, inward union of hearts with all created things both great and small, the true keynote of all hymns—how could there be any place at all for these things in the Egyptian life-feeling, anaemic with civilization? "The fundamental spiritual trait is inaptitude or wilful refusal to become identified with things. The frightful presumption that the human soul is the only thing of value in the whole round of creation—this is the true heritage of the Nile valley." [32]

II

A comparatively detailed exposition of the exceptional sociological structure of the general culture of Egypt was necessary in order to provide the understanding and estimation of Egyptian art with a background allowing of a fair and unfettered judgment. It is just the growing appreciation of Egyptian art which has in quite recent times led once more to a prejudice in favour of the entire Egyptian phenomenon. The glory of Egypt would long ago have paled after the disillusioning decipherment of the hieroglyphs, and especially of the Pyramid texts, if these Pyramids themselves did not remain there to retain for themselves the last word—and that a word which seems at a single stroke to condemn to silence every misgiving as to the greatness of Egypt. And what is true of the Pyramids is true of all other monumental evidences of Egypt's past, whether architectural or sculptural. There they are, all so indisputably great and sublime, that it seems like sacrilege to question their value. And yet this question of their value must be raised. For it is inconceivable, if art is anything more than a chance cleverness of hand, that a people should wear a different appearance in its art and in the rest of its cultural life. Either therefore the spirit of the Pyramid-texts or the spirit of the Pyramids themselves is deceiving us. *Tertium non datur.*

If we ask ourselves wherein chiefly consists the strong power of impressiveness in Egyptian works of art, there can be no doubt as to the answer: it consists in the certainty and uniformity of style pervading the whole of Egyptian art. The way in which from the first day of the Old Kingdom to the last of the New it clings in all essentials to a quite definite, exclusive principle of style, never showing the least hesitation or wavering in this its so to speak apriori attitude, constitutes an exceptional case without a parallel in the history of the world. Certain it is that to-day a closer knowledge of Egyptian monuments has destroyed the earlier assumption of the absolute evolutionary immobility of Egyptian artistic production, and that every day discovers new niceties of difference in the seemingly so even and uniform appearance; but these variations lie so to speak only on the surface of the water. In the depths the same still

immobility endures. The apriori nature of the Egyptian formal attitude is maintained. Certainty and unity of style are therefore what is really extraordinary about Egyptian art; it is these qualities which are above all far more important and full of significance as a phenomenon than any question as to how this style came into being. " If style is the unified form of a realized idea to which nature is subjected by an artist, then Egyptian art is the greatest example of style anywhere to be found. For no other art maintains the spectacle of a similar unvarying persistence. For three thousand years it asserted the system of its form, once for all discovered, a system to which every one of its countless artistic utterances is subordinate; and in this tremendous period of culture there came about an artistic transformation which was indeed much greater than could possibly have been known to earlier research, but not really a development." [33]

The first question must therefore be: Do these singular peculiarities of Egyptian art—certainty, uniformity and consistency—constitute under all circumstances something positive? Or better, do they under all circumstances constitute an indication of strength of the artistic will? The answer must once again proceed first and foremost from sociological considerations.

If our view is correct that Egypt is to be regarded sociologically as an artificial product, refined to a high degree as a result of special conditions, all the cultural relationships of which, having no connection with a substructure of natural growth, are determined only by the system of an artificial superstructure erected above the facts of nature, then it is out of the question that a strong artistic productivity should develop in so de-naturalized a soil. From this it follows that this consistency of attitude in artistic style cannot signify strength of artistic productivity. Indeed, it may be said that where such strength is present, such a polished uniformity of all artistic formulation can only be attained with great difficulty; we find in such conditions rather the emergence of ever new energies in the process of artistic growth, so that their formations are constantly being questioned anew as to their finality and need continually to seek their equilibrium afresh between tendencies of varying nature. In fact, a surging immediacy with all the marks of the struggle for stylistic unification is the true *conditio sine qua non* of natural artistic

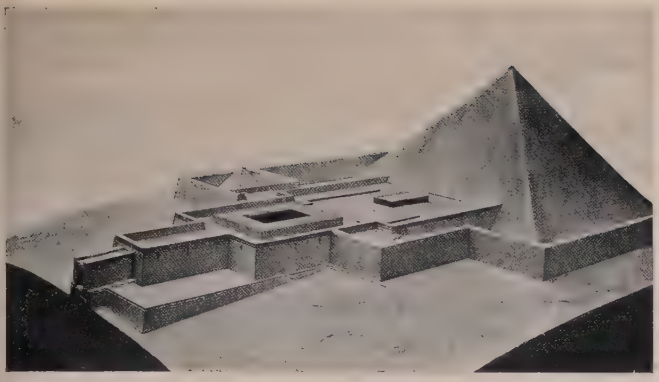
fecundity. The Egyptian uniformity, however, looks like an apriori which knows no struggle and has no resistances, no problems to contend with; and thus it merely follows as a matter of course that it lacks the chief characteristic of natural existence, namely, vitality of inner development.

If therefore this artistic certainty is not the sign of strength of artistic impulse, but rather a sign which betrays its non-existence, what kind of strength can it be that is exerted in this singular certainty of form of Egyptian art? Let us give the answer in advance: It is strength of convention, making good the lack of impulse. Artificial conditions of culture like those of Egypt develop precisely on account of their artificiality—that is, through the circumstance of their being unhindered by the eternal irrationality and incalculableness of natural growth—a capacity for conventional construction, the artistic value of which need not be disparaged, so long as it is not confused with values of natural growth. Here again we may cite for comparison America, where, for example, in architecture (in so far as it has grown out of American actualities, as in industrial buildings, factories, and grain-elevators, and does not appear in the dress of imitation European styles as a cosmopolitan cultured language devoid of character), a greatness and decisiveness of practical construction has developed which is artistically of the highest value, and has rightly become the standard for the architecture of new Europe, that is, of Europe under limitations which are no longer *historical* but *technical*. Whatever product of technical culture we look upon that is the work of American hands, whether factories or grain-elevators or anything else, it instantly displays a sureness and absoluteness of form which is thoroughly convincing in its effect. Why is this so? It is because in the process of artistic formulation the restrictions are lacking which arise from a natural sphere of sensibility. Unhindered by this intervention every form at once takes on the final, irrevocable stamp of its practical purpose. In this case also there is no struggle, no resistance, no problem to be solved, only sheer consistency of practical logic, becoming immediately through its character of finality the starting-point of a uniform convention. It is clear that in this connection we cannot talk of an artistic fecundity in the sense to which we are accustomed; for this urge to formation is controlled by facts, and not by man and thus by nature.

To express it in a rough and ready manner—this American power of formation is lack of imagination. For this reason its form is the highest form of objective rationality.

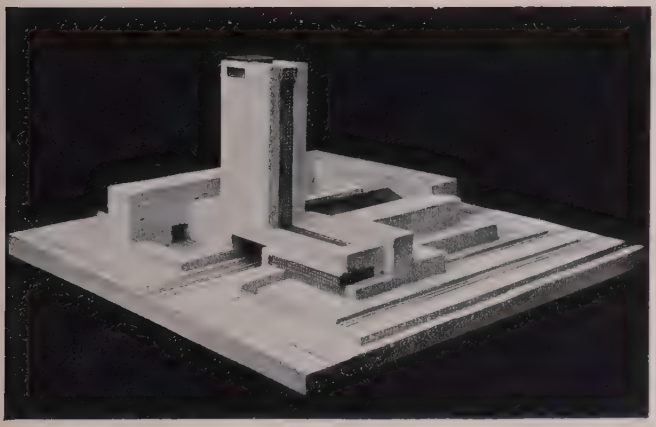
Objective rationality is also undoubtedly one of the most impressive sides of *Egyptian* architecture. The characteristic which speaks out most clearly in it as a phenomenon in general is that naked, abstract absoluteness of the constructive spirit in its cold grandeur, its terse decidedness, its renunciation of every superfluous articulation. To make clear that the absolute certainty and clarity of its character has really something to do with what we call Americanism in architecture, we may set side by side the model of an Egyptian temple and pyramid group and a country house in the modern universal style or a model of a modern aerodrome (figs. 8, 9, 10). The will to architectural objectivity, sober but absolutely sure in its forms, brings the buildings into the closest relationship; and immediately we find present the impression of inevitability and finality, which is the outcome of this logical decisiveness of form. At the first glance we say to ourselves that in the one case as in the other consistency of abstract formation has trimmed away all inner evolutionary vitality. For evolution is an organic term, concerned with nature, but here the dictates of the abstract prevail. Where once these dictates have been pronounced with such decidedness, only a continuance of work under the same clearly settled conditions is possible, and the result is the uniform conventionality of all constructive formations that have thus arisen. Only to an artificial people divorced from nature is it possible so quickly and surely to find this objective absoluteness of architectural style.

The fact must certainly not be contested that (to judge by the impression produced) a great bias towards synthesis is present in the grandiose simplicity of the Egyptian architectural form; but in this bias every impulse traceable to a prior history is lacking. It is without tension, without strain. It simply draws the shortest line between two points, and that is the straight line. Our illustration gives a splendid example (fig. 18). Further, how could the men in whose intellectual and spiritual life in its other phases one observes precisely the absence of every synthetic aptitude, have possessed this aptitude for once in art? How could men who were demonstrably so immeasurably confused in all their ideas, for once in their art have attained such clarity and simplicity? This contradiction,



8. SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT
OF KING SAHU-RA
Model of a Temple of the Dead
and the Pyramid

9. BUNGALOW IN ZEALAND
(DENMARK)



10. MODEL FOR THE CENTRAL
AERODROME IN BERLIN
By H. Koshina

if in other respects there is a unity of cultured expression, can indeed only be explained by assuming that this apparently synthetic bias in their art is not by any means to be regarded as the ideal putting forth of power which we otherwise conceive artistic synthesis to be. It must on the contrary be a kind of technical and logical inevitability, which, unhindered by any ideal impulsion, leads to this clear script of architectural form. In short, like every other deeper sensibility, artistic sensibility is also wanting in the Egyptian. This leaves the way open for him to his abstract rectilinearity.

The best symbol of Egyptian art is to be found in the Egyptian relief. No stranger, more consistent two-dimensional art has ever existed, but it is just two-dimensional art and no more. We may think of Greek art — how much artistic thinking had to be employed by it before it discovered its ideal relief style, that wonderfully delicate play of balance between surface and depth which even in the most perfect productions still always reflects the hesitations of a never-to-be-overcome tension between surface and depth. The Egyptian relief is from the very first complete in its pure surface character. No unrest born of depth finds its way into it. It is entirely without tension and conflict. The third dimension, the dimension by which we are actually aware of depth, from which all that is more profound in the drama of artistic creation draws its inspiration, is not present at all as a resistant in the artistic consciousness of the Egyptian. Artistic consciousness, however, is nothing but life-consciousness, and this means that the whole life-consciousness of Egypt is superficial, undisturbed by any true depth. Lifted out of all the undercurrents of immediacy into the thin air of an artificially schemed existence, it creates for itself without effort perfections, but they are perfections operating only between two dimensions, and therefore finding no difficulty in being clear and unequivocal.*

Can it be, however, that immediately alongside the cold abstractness of the Pyramids, the fantastic monstrousness of the Sphinx figures grows from the soil to chastise the lies which see in cold intellectual logic the

* In this connection the assertion of Leo Frobenius in *Das unbekannte Afrika*, that sculpture and Hamitism are inwardly incompatible, is worthy of attention. "Where sculpture is found in the Hamite region of culture it is a foreign importation" (p. 156). His contention is that the origin of Egyptian plastic art is to be found in the cultural province formed by Erythraea, Southern Arabia, and India (p. 145).

fundamental tone of Egypt? Will anyone still continue to believe in the soberness of the Egyptians who has stood in the presence of these daemonic Sphinxes? The answer to these well-justified questions must start first of all with something quite superficial, namely, the fact that in the case of the Gizeh Sphinx, which always comes first to mind when Egyptian Sphinx-figures are mentioned, the charm of dilapidation which to-day we interpret as the charm of a daemonic mysteriousness has only been bestowed upon it by the weathering of thousands of years and deliberate defacement caused by the shots of Mamelukes. The face was originally, in its stiff regularity, filled with great, listless calm, and from every point of view expressionless. If one must speak of a strength of expression, then it consists only in the absolute expressionlessness of the figure—a strainless, majestic silence into which only later romanticism could read tension and repression.

But even granting the unintended removal of this immobility of physiognomy through later external influences, is there not still left an inward daemonic character about these colossal formations? This is indeed true, although the expression "daemonic" is perhaps not apposite. But allowing for the moment that we may accept it, what gives rise to this presumed inward daemonic quality? It arises from the circumstance that we find combined in the absurdest manner two diametrically opposed artistic elements, or elements of form, namely the crudest naturalism and the utmost consistency of purely abstract formal logic. The contraries which are here opposed by one another and apparently balanced are no other than those which run through the whole Egyptian world of ideas, and are based upon the essential difference between the material of this world and the will to formation applied to it. The will to formation is what we know from the architecture, which not being exposed to seduction by fancy, always draws the shortest and straightest line between two points. This rectilinearity devoid of fancy, this practical sobriety, is here projected into a material which is anything but devoid of fancy, being rather derived in the most definite manner from the deepest sphere of religious fancy. It is primeval animal cult, primeval totemism and fetishism, that here break through as religious atavism out of a myth-creating past into the thin air of the Egyptian colonist culture, to be externally registered rather than organically worked

11. THE SKY-GODDESS NUT
Late Egyptian. New York Museum

up by the soberly clear and practical formal logic which arises in so thin and de-naturalized an atmosphere. An immediacy in closest connection with nature is thus artificially worked over by abstraction as far as possible removed from nature. Indeed, " worked over " is the determining word. The entire religious conceptions which, derived from the submerged original soil or from the region of alien plantation, fill up the religious vacuum of Egyptian civilization, are merely worked *over* and never worked *up* by these Egyptians; and the intelligent method by which they were worked over was always in harshest contrast to the irrational nature of the material. And this contrast, unknown in so crude a form to any other culture, and by reason of this want of a parallel, inaccessible to historical knowledge focussed only upon the normal, became just the occasion of that overestimating misunderstanding to which Egyptian art and culture have been subject. It led to that *credo quia absurdum*, that glorification of the abstruse.

It is therefore, as it were, religious naturalism of the crudest kind which the logic of abstract style, in an unreflecting way that ignores all problems, works over with this stock of motives drawn from the cult of animals. This contradictory form of working over was to the Egyptian himself only a matter of course; the after-world poetically read into it the utmost profundities. The riddles which quite certainly did not exist in the Sphinx-figures for the Egyptian, were first poetically read into them by the Greeks.[34]

But what bearing has this on the artistic naturalism which speaks out so directly side by side with this abstract fashioning in every creation of Egyptian art? For these Sphinxes, quite apart from the nature of their motives, do display a naturalistic accuracy which makes itself felt with quite astounding impressiveness within the framework of the abstract surface-formation—crudest naturalism and utmost abstraction of style: this too is one of the established forms of the Egyptian paradox!

The question now arises whether at least this naturalism is primitive and indigenous—like the religious naturalism which the Egyptians preserved for themselves from early times right through their further development—or whether it is exactly the complement of their de-naturalized artificial way of life. That there is not *one* kind of naturalism only but several, that above all there is one naturalism of primitive stages

and another of the advanced stage of civilization, is, of course, incontestable. Primitive naturalism is not an affair of the eyes but of the whole man and his spiritual attitude towards his experience of nature. This experience of nature is so strong and immediate and so fully at one with his general metaphysical idea of the world, that the naturalism derived from it may best be called a magic naturalism. We might even speak of a transcendent naturalism, for the very reason that it transcends experience of nature and passes into the region of religion and metaphysics. The naturalism of advanced civilization is of an entirely different kind, arising as it does just because no essentially superior ideas any longer introduce themselves between experience of nature and its outcome in art, leading it into transcendence. This naturalism which is concentrated in the eye might be called, in contrast to magic, spiritually determined naturalism, a sober naturalism of observation. It is thus really distinguished from the other kind only in its character of intensity and in its specific gravity. Magic naturalism is, so to speak, double-bottomed and mysterious, and in its elusiveness always much more than it allows itself to seem to those who do not go beyond the external circumstances of truth to nature; sober naturalism on the other hand exists for its own sake, dispensing with higher considerations and saying nothing more than it professes to say. No secrets float around it. The fact that this naturalism in its modern form has been developed most strongly in the atmosphere of great cities is indeed sufficiently eloquent of its sociological determinants.

From all that has been said above there results the probability that Egyptian naturalism also is a naturalism of a high degree of culture, or better, of civilization. This keenness of observation, this dead-accurate literalness of reproduction comes from a despiritualized world. This accords with the fact that the outer shell of a phenomenon is never passed, and absolutely no attempt is made to penetrate into the inner law of phenomena. The lawless casuality of the results of observation is, of course, afterwards worked over or embroidered with a legality derived from without, in fact, with the legality of this aprioristic convention of style. The whole when applied to a substratum which has essentially nothing to do either with this civilized naturalism or with this veneer of civilized conventionalism of style, when applied, that is, to those remnants which had been preserved from the submerged primeval religion, produces the

13. STATUE OF THE GODDESS THOUERIS

Cairo

14. STATUE OF THE GODDESS SEKHMET
London

complexio oppositorum of the Sphinx-figure, which is in this respect really typical of the entire heterogeneous conglomerate of the Egyptian cultural character. But it is just this indissoluble and seemingly matter-of-fact welding together of opposites that has conjured up for the after-world the impression that one is here in the presence of daemony in the grand style. People who would merely pass by the fetishistic idols of some Australian tribe or other as a curiosity of religious history, feel a thrill of reverence and solemnity when this same fetishism confronts them in the grandiose but quite superficially schematic and, in the religious sense, inorganic working-over effected by the Egyptian convention. And yet, the fact that the student of the science of religion can diagnose in the Egyptian body of ideas only a paltry daemonology—a daemonology limited to petty spirits such as spirits of the dead and promoters of sickness, and on no account comparable in any way with the profundity of Babylonian daemonology [35]—must in itself have aroused misgivings as to the assumption that Egypt could be a fertile soil for an *artistic* daemonic creation of true greatness.*

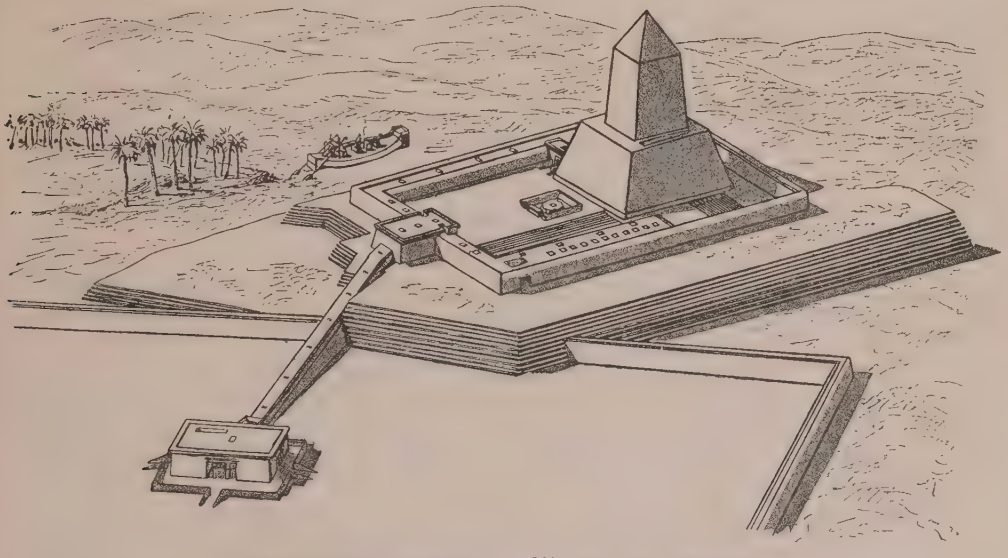
The negative concessions to which even the greatest experts and admirers of Egyptian art have found themselves driven are characteristic of the estimation of this whole body of Egyptian conceptions. Heinrich Schaefer [36] sums up by saying: "In Egyptian visual art we are struck by the almost entire lack of creative fancy, in contrast to many of the creations of the art of Western Asia, as well as to certain introduced elements in the art of the early period of Egypt itself, carried on as survivals into the later art. Certainly Egyptian art succeeded in creating, in most of its animal-headed gods and especially in the Sphinx, figures which almost allow us to forget that diverse constituents have been welded

* It is a characteristic fact that in the case of the Sphinx of Gizeh, the recent excavation and disengagement from the desert sand of buried lion's paws (Fig. 12) are regarded by the faithful of the Egypt cult as a sacrilege. This piece of naturalism, which is there brought to light and not only changes the whole proportions, but also brings into much clearer prominence the absurdity and abruptness of the whole, is felt as an injury to customary ideas of the abstract sublimity of the great Sphinx figures. There all at once is a gigantic cat with the head of a king crouching on the desert soil, in all its starkness, not as hitherto with the head alone allowed to speak, so to say, by the drift of the sand. It is quite impossible to wait until fresh driftings of the sand have once again restored the false impression we have been accustomed to. It is not the real Egypt that is wanted, but an ideal conception of it which has been formed on a basis of misunderstandings and accidents.

together in them; yet the parts have not been fused in the same furnace as they have, for example, in many a similar Babylonian figure; it is a case of working over instead of working up and working through. In fact, in the Sphinx and other animal-headed gods the parts have really been merely thrust upon one another by means of cleverly deceptive connections such as manes, head-cloths, etc. And so, in the case of many figures of spirits intended to portray frightfulness, we are seldom overcome with the horror with which they ought to overwhelm us and which their names portend. It is not the forms in themselves, but the literal multiplication of a number of portions of terrible animals that is enlisted to communicate an atmosphere of frightfulness. In Egypt all these things remain too much in the region of soberly beheld natural forms to be capable of any uncanny effect." Everyone will concede that in these words we have the strongest affirmation of our critical view of the secret of the Sphinx and of the Egyptian artistic and intellectual attitude represented by it (figs. 13, 14). Ludwig Curtius [37] also comes to the same final judgment when he says: "The Egyptian monsters are wanting in ultimate credibility. Their primitive original form has been left too far behind and is no longer comprehensible." It will certainly always be deeply impressive to see these gigantic guardians of the tomb, with their twofold aspect of immediate nearness to nature and of abstraction as far removed as possible from nature, springing from the ground alongside the cold petrified absoluteness of the Pyramids. But one must be clear as to the meaning of this juxtaposition; for these gigantic fabulous figures have less to do with the objective spirit of the Pyramids than with the abstruse spirit of the Pyramid texts, being indeed something like enormous monumentalized spell-formulas of evil-averting significance. We do indeed read [38] that the Egyptians may have believed in the actual existence of such fabulous creatures of the desert with the body of a lion and a human head, but it will be very difficult to perceive the degree of this faith.

Our historical consciousness has become quite accustomed to this conjunction of Pyramids and Sphinx, and we must first take pains to make clear the essential background of both phenomena in order to be sensible of them as something not to be taken as a matter of course, but in the highest degree exceptional. Reconstructions of sun-temples of

the 5th Dynasty show us a gigantic ship-model built up of bricks lying in immediate proximity to extensive monumental architecture of clear-cut objective formation.[39] This must be a reproduction of the great ship in which the sun-god daily voyages across the heavens. Any kind of symbolic conception is thus made visible in concrete form with the crudest literalness, and nothing offensive is found in giving monumental shape to this literalness and setting it in all its abruptness side by side with the abstract strength and rigidness of the temple architecture itself.



SANCTUARY OF THE SUN OF KING NE-USER-RA

If these brick-built giant ships still existed, it would be easier to disclose that hybrid intellectual character of the Egyptian which was belauded from the time of Herodotus onwards as profundity and wisdom. As it was, however, one saw nothing but always the enigmatic nature of the Sphinxes, instead of coming to recognize them also, by comparison with these monstrous 30-metre long vessels, for what they really were, namely, a quite unenigmatic and patent formulation of any sort of conceptions inherited from a creative past and worked over by civilization.

The secret of the Sphinx is justly ranged with the secret of the hieroglyphs. Every conception of Egyptian profundity has been bound up from of old with these strange signs, and even to-day the magic cloak

of every conjuror at a fair is still covered with hieroglyphs. What a mass of false ideas had been ineradicably disseminated about them before their decipherment made clear the relatively sober actual facts. A story of errors centuries old, all arising out of an overstrained conception of the profound secrets of these holy symbols, and an epilogue of the truth which, contrasted with the traditional prejudices, could only be felt as a disillusionment—this is the story of the study of the hieroglyphs. And this story will repeat itself in relation to the entire Egyptian problem. The whole life of Egypt has come down to us as a hieroglyph for the decipherment of which there seemed, under the pressure of the Egyptian legend, to be only one way, that of reading out of it the fullest measure of the profoundest and most significant secrets, and here again a day of decipherment is coming which, when it has removed the husks from the "secret," will find no real kernel left. This course will be followed by the whole story of Egyptological research, as the following example from the investigation of the hieroglyphs indicates. Seventeen characters which since the decipherment of the hieroglyphs we are able to explain as having no significance but an alphabetical rendering of the mere name of the Emperor Domitian, were interpreted in a very different manner by the Jesuit Athanasius Kirchner—a man of the highest repute in his day—on the grounds of a firmly-rooted idea that Egyptian hieroglyphs could only be an ideographic script (in which every character signifies a whole complex of ideas); he read them as follows: "The beneficent Lord of Creation, in Heaven four times mighty, through the beneficent Moptha hands over the airy moisture to Ammon, who is mighty in the Underworld and is instigated through his statue and fit ceremonies to exert his power." By comparing the turgid reading of fanciful prejudice with the sober reading of established truth, we gain a forecast of the whole history of Egyptology.[40]

The hieroglyphs certainly have something exceptional about them, but in what does it consist? It consists in the fact that they are a pictorial script, and that the Egyptians throughout all stages of their development —a development which yet led to a civilized high culture of the first order —remained true to this primitive expedient for fixation and communication in writing. For Hieratic and Demotic are in the last resort only curtailed and reduced forms of the Hieroglyphic, and in opposition to

these derivative forms the original form, as is well known, always in principle preserved its validity as a solemn and sacred script. It is the same as in all other Egyptian phenomena; a richly imaginative product of creative early times becomes an apriori which is rigidly adhered to in principle. The story of the hieroglyphs is the story of a laboriously preserved primitivism. As the nearest analogy one may recall the cult of animals.

Whence comes it therefore, we must ask further, that even after the discovery of the secret of the hieroglpyhs, the deciphering of many texts still gives so much trouble and often has to be given up as devoid of result? It is because what we call the evolution of this system of writing is not an evolution into an organic and uniform *interfusion*, but into a logically untransparent *juxtaposition*. Just as the Egyptian pantheon is a storehouse of deities with no other arrangement about it than that of juxtaposition, so the system of hieroglyphs also is a storehouse of written characters in which the various stages of evolution have been retained in a juxtaposition which is also logically non-transparent and inconsistent. Here again there is no other law of formation than that of conventional validity. As early as the period of the Old Kingdom the hieroglyphs are susceptible of division into at least five categories,[41] based upon entirely different principles of significance. We need only recall the greatest distinction in principle—a written character sometimes stands for a whole word, at other times it shrinks in its significance to the rendering of a single syllable or even of a single consonant in the alphabet. It is never a question merely of "either . . . or," but also of "as well as . . ."[42] True activity in the creation of script therefore broke off at the moment when the apriori was established, and what afterwards still looks like evolution has nothing to do with the evolution we observe in other systems of script but is a differentiation taking place, to meet practical requirements, within the framework of this rigidly retained apriori, its systematic arrangement being determined not by an organic compulsion, but by the arbitrariness of convention. The deciphering of the hieroglyphs constantly causes us new difficulties only because we approach them with our preconception of a logical evolution of script. The difficulties are the same which we encounter in deciphering the Egyptian form of religion and Egyptian belief about the gods, so long as we approach them with our demands for a natural logic in the ideas inherent in them. In matters

Egyptian indeed everything is quite different, and we must first disburden ourselves of all customary and natural inferences from analogy if we wish to attain an intelligent relationship towards this world apart, divorced as it is from nature and therefore subject to quite other laws. Every inference from the analogy of worlds familiar to us becomes of necessity in this case a false inference.

We grasp only one side of the problem if we regard the pictorial script of the hieroglyphs as a rare case of the preservation of a primitive form of exposition and communication in writing. It is here again rather a case of this, so to speak, atavistic system of communication becoming subordinated to a will to formation in the most violent contrast to the essential nature of this script material (figs. 15, 16, etc.). That is to say, all the uncertainties, ambiguities, and confusions in the material of the script are subordinated to a script-spirit quite unambiguous in its procedure, and the name of this unambiguousness is order and clarity in the highest degree. Once again we have the contrast between the essence of the material and the formative spirit by which it is mastered. A hieroglyph text regarded as a typographical whole is of spotless purity and beauty of impress. The arrangement over the surfaces, the nice calculation of the distance from the lines of the border, the vertical and lateral spacing of the characters measured with the utmost fineness of feeling, the part which the well-balanced interspaces are allowed to play—all this makes of such hieroglyphic texts a miracle of unfaltering truth to type. A disordered and obscure content—and that is what this system of characters is at bottom—could not possibly be handled with a greater sense of order and clarity, a thoroughly unsystematic content could not possibly be systematized with more rigid formality than is here the case. The structure of the typographical whole impresses itself upon the eye with the same rectilinearity and exactness of spacing as the lines of an Egyptian temple-plan, in which likewise such an absurd and confused sense of purpose is concealed beneath formal clarity. We know that, when greater typographical beauty and clarity could be attained for the whole, the Egyptians did not trouble themselves about the risk of reducing in no small measure the legibility of the text, and of departing from the grammatical and syntactical arrangement of its rendering. Thus we have a maximum of sense for formal ordering applied to a material fundament-

15. LIMESTONE INSCRIPTION OF KING AMENEMHAT III
From a Temple at Crocodilopolis. Berlin

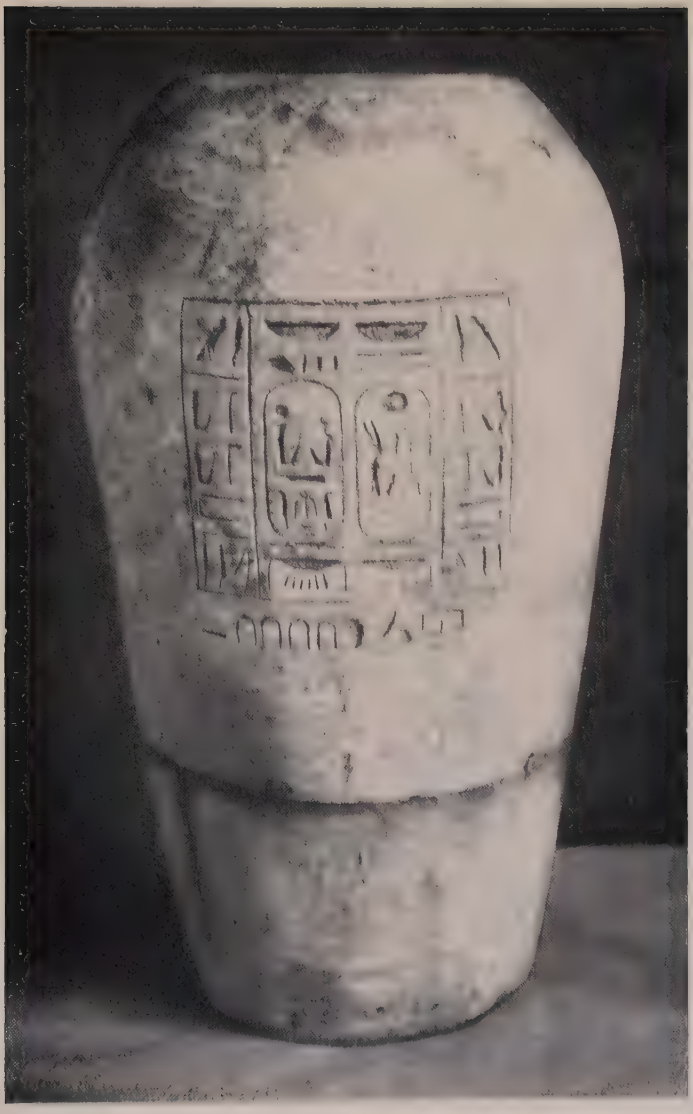
ally devoid of order and absurd, the utmost abstract rationality projected upon a material composed of literal renderings of pictorial significance originally intended to have an entirely concrete meaning and therefore irrational and casual. The basis of the form and the spirit of the form could not possibly be more irreconcilable than they are in this case, and here again this irreconcilability created for posterity that *credo quia absurdum* which keeps alive the entire halo of glory with which things Egyptian are surrounded.

This entirely extraordinary formal character of Egyptian typography is not estimated, not generally at all events, in its full significance, because the principles of this sense of formal order have come to be taken by us for granted. The building-up of a connected structure of written characters in such well-composed architecture, their fitting together in exact rows with articulations well measured off from one another, their subdivision into finely proportioned separate compartments, will seem no more miraculous to us than the rectilinear and rectangular system of the ground-plan of a house. And yet, from the point of view of the history of evolution, this apparent obviousness involves the greatest of miracles, the miracle which had once to become fact in order then to have in effect the convincing power of the obvious. And what was needful to bring into the world this miracle of obviousness? Was it a putting forth of creative power in overcoming confusion? No, it was not that, but a sobriety incapable of error and devoid of tension which simply has not imagination and driving force enough to think out any link between two points but the straight line. By dint of this rationally objective sobriety the Egyptians established a grammar of principles of arrangement which was bound to become a standard for all posterity. It is in a high degree notable that the fundamental terms of formal arrangement were set up on the basis not of an exertion of ideal power—in so far as we assume this as a matter of course we are thinking along Greek lines without knowing it—but of an absence of imagination which comes nearer to clear objectivity than does any vitally rhythmic natural power of creative sensibility. A clause in an Egyptian hieroglyphic text is a miracle of absolute statics. The power of stabilization here attained in opposition to the dynamic of living movement, is the first great instance of stabilization in the history of the world. If I refer to the second and third, namely,

the Roman and Anglo-Saxon, we shall immediately become conscious of the body of jejune presuppositions common to them all, which of necessity unites these three peoples as vehicles of the idea of stabilization; and, it may be noted parenthetically, we shall uneasily reflect what would have become of mankind if this world of clear rigidity had not found its counterpart in a world centred round that idea of adaptability whose name is, in ancient times, Greece and in modern, France.

Yet the clarity and objectivity of Rome and of the Anglo-Saxons are distinguished from Egyptian clarity and objectivity by being free from the paradox which makes Egypt an exceptional case, the paradox, that is to say, that in this mould of absolute clarity is cast a material content so utterly confused, a material of which the essence may be defined approximately as atavism preserved and stored with scrupulous care. If this content indicates the absence of any creative power capable of further activity, and the consecration of an apriori through consciousness of this lack of power, then even this ordering spirit of form cannot possibly signify a creative exertion of synthetic power, but must be a cold and sober intellectual product of the unimpassioned sentiments of the curator.

The Rosetta Stone, from which the decipherment started, provides an opportunity for an experiment worth making. The same text is to be found on it in three scripts, one below another, Hieroglyphic, Demotic, and Greek. Set an unprejudiced person in front of this stone and ask him to express, from the formal impression alone, an opinion as to the exponents of these various attitudes towards script. He will not hesitate one moment for an answer, and that will be, that if attitude towards the world may be inferred from attitude towards script, the people behind the Hieroglyphic text are the highest of the three. The two other scripts, he will say, are chaotic, bearing witness to scant aptitude for the creation of order in the structure of a script or of a world; here in the Hieroglyphic text alone is the speech of men who have overcome chaos. If he is then asked further his conception of the relationship in chronological development between the three scripts, he will undoubtedly answer—assuming that he keeps his eyes from the written characters in detail and confines himself to the general formal appearance alone—that the Greek text represents the lowest stage of development, and that an advance follows to the highest stage represented by the Hieroglyphic text; so strongly will he



17. ALABASTER JAR WITH INSCRIPTION
Berlin

be dominated by the inevitable formal impression that only in the Hieroglyphic has success been attained in stabilizing the structure of a script or of the world. If the spectacles through which we see only the formal are then taken away from his eyes, and he is allowed to perceive that the script which he holds to be the latest and most refined from the point of view of evolutionary history, is in its character as script a primitive pictorial script; that the script which he looks upon as farthest removed from chaos is as script nearest to the chaos of arbitrary accident; that the one which he regards formally as the means of expressing a clarification of the universe, is in its entire essence, based as it is only on concrete foundations, incapable of expressing the simplest idea, whereas the script which in its formal impression is the least clear of all, is that in which Plato wrote—then the insight he will gain into the problematical nature of formal ordering and clarity will show him that in such things it is not the bare matter of fact, but the degree of tension overcome in them, that is decisive. From the contrast between the nature of the hieroglyphs and their formal working-over (not working-up) he will perceive that the orderliness in them which has excited his wonder is devoid of tension. And he will understand why the Greeks never arrived at so neat and lastingly immaculate a type of script as the Egyptians or, in a less degree, the Romans. To us, perhaps, the connection between Greek script and the Parthenon sculptures is not immediately intelligible; we can with difficulty conceive that a people whose writing was, so to speak, so shaky, who wrote in such a thin, vague script, had the sure, calm hand to write down this exalted figure-text, so pregnant with meaning, so firmly marked, of the Parthenon sculptures; and yet those who have an inkling of this connection will be the first to become true participants in the result of the Greek miracle. They will perhaps look upon Greek sculpture in a different way, less influenced by the sterilizing Roman modifications, but they will see it more justly—for the reason that in all the calmness of form they will still see signs of faltering.

Nothing more significant can be said of the Egyptian pictorial script and of the idea of the world corresponding to it than that it is *un*faltering. *Doch im Erstarren such' ich nicht mein Heil, das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes Teil.**

* Goethe, *Faust*, Part 2, Act 1.

III

These investigations are intended in the first instance to trace the great typical development of events in the history of *architecture*. Sculpture and painting will only be introduced by way of comparison.

The rôle in world-history played by Egyptian architecture is determined above all by one circumstance—that it is a stone architecture of great style. A fact that has become for us a matter of course, namely, that all monumental architecture is stone architecture, had first to be proclaimed once for all and without ambiguity, and this was done by Egypt. Egypt is the great home of monumental stone construction, just as Western Asia is the home of monumental brick construction.

We ought not to take this too much as a matter of course.

The explanation by reference to geological conditions which suggests itself can only be partly satisfactory. Certainly the mountain ranges bordering the Nile valley offered an ideal treasure-house of the most precious and most lasting stone material, but how strong must have been the will to work in stone, to overcome all the technical obstacles which stood in the way of getting the huge blocks of stone and transporting them into the plains of the valley. One has to bear in mind, moreover, that this transport was chiefly dependent upon water-carriage. These gigantic blocks had to be brought to the place for which they were destined upon frail rafts and Nile boats. And when they were set up at their destination, they were great strangers upon the thin upper surface of this desert soil exploited by civilization, strangers from the mountains. We cannot admit that any unity grew up between the Egyptian soil and the gigantic stone monuments. Here it is rather the power of absolute contrast which determines the impression received. It was not a natural logic of geology that set these stone giants in their place, but a conscious will to art, following a definite abstract command without any feeling for the physical nature of the land. Egyptian stone architecture is just a deliberate and gigantic denial of the hazardousness and transcience in the midst of which the artificial structure of Egyptian culture is placed. But there is nothing heroic about this denial; it is rather the obvious dictate of a cold will

18. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HALL OF PILLARS IN THE GATE-BUILDING OF CHEPHREN

to power triumphing without feeling over natural will. The outcome is absolute immediacy in the resultant phenomena.

In this problem therefore it is not a question of the geological occurrence of stone as a material, but of a will to stone merely favoured by geological conditions. It is this strong exclusive will to stone which has to be explained. Here, as in all other matters Egyptian, we have to think of motives entirely different in their essential complexion. Primitive atavism and the claims of civilized high culture here also enter into an alliance.

Primitive atavism—what does this signify? Compare the porch of the sepulchral temple of Chephren (fig. 18) with a prehistoric stone building in Central Tunis (fig. 19), or the stone tomb at Keryaval in Brittany (fig. 20). Is there here any equation other than the obvious one between different evidences of a monumental A B C of vertical architecture? Are there not simple original categories of structural logic, of which the expressions are to be found in the most diverse places without the need of any historical connection to explain the fact? No, this apparent simplicity is something unusual, and where this unusual quality asserts itself there must be a reason for it in a definite cultural connection. For the unusual in this case consists not in the rudiments of the logic of statics but in the fact that, in defiance of all technical obstacles, it asserts itself in this monumental form of the megalith structure; and this is traceable to such a pronounced degree only in one quite definite historical cultural region, namely, that radiation of culture, ever becoming more comprehensibly apparent, of which the connected regions of distribution extend across the North-western and South-western confines of Europe to the Northern edge of Africa. It is the culture of the neolithic prehistoric Eurafrican continent which here confronts us. The way along which this megalith-building cultural connection spread, is still marked to-day upon the map of world-history by the remains of a gigantic runic script of dolmens and menhirs. Many theories have been bound up with this so-called dolmen track. The direction taken by this track in history was the chief point in dispute. In earlier researches the inclination, in conformity with the eastward focussing of science then exclusively dominant, was to trace this direction from the East westwards; more recent investigation, however, takes its stand more and more

definitely in favour of an independent prehistoric West European culture, and accordingly transfers the starting-point of development to a centre radiating out from West to East. Egypt is not the starting-point, but a point of transit in this movement; quite certainly it is not its termination, but the problem of the further eastward extension of this movement does not call for discussion here.

Megalith-construction is thus to be taken as the decisive point of emergence of the monumental idea. Its monumentality is the highest form of inanimateness guaranteed by the lifeless stone, and only the inanimate is lasting. Instead of saying that the Egyptians built the dwellings of their dead for eternity, it is more true to say that they wished to give permanent interpretation to a definite condition by heaping these masses of stone above the mortuary chambers of their dead, whose further existence was one of danger. All Egyptian stone construction retains this essential complexion of being an interpretation intended to be permanent, a tensionless prolongation of a condition that has once been, rather than a victory over life under stress of the idea of eternity. There is no Egyptian afterworld, only an extension of this world in another form.

I described these elementary stone erections as something unusual. In what does the unusualness consist? Men who live in caves or lightly constructed huts and who, in the matter of utilitarian structures, are worlds away from any idea of monumental building in our sense, for once heap up monsters of stone which only races of giants would seem able to compass. Technical difficulties, to overcome which, even at the present day, with perfected technical methods available, would mean a noteworthy achievement, are forcibly surmounted by these so-called primitive peoples at the cost of an almost incalculable application of physical power without leaving any trace of the effort exerted. It will always remain one of the most memorable facts in the history of architecture that this greatest of technical achievements with which that history begins did not receive its impulse from any notion of utilitarian construction, but was directed exclusively by the urge of an ideal structural conception. And this breaking away from habits of intimate utilitarian construction into a Beyond monumental to the last degree and quite devoid of transitoriness, came about by force of a complex of conceptions focussed upon the cult of the dead.

19. PREHISTORIC STONE BUILDING IN CENTRAL TUNIS

20. STONE SEPULCHRE AT KERYAVAL IN BRITTANY

Cult of the dead and stone! These two elements are closely interwoven with one another, and from this relationship there arises the original *conditio sine qua non* of that other element which we call tectonic or architectonic monumentality.

It is pleasant and tempting to say that the dwellings for the dead, in contrast to those for the living, were built for eternity. But this poetical interpretation is tinged with something which in its modernity does not rightly harmonize with what we know of conceptions prevalent in the dawn of history. In any case it needs amplification in several directions. The idea of the durability of the dwelling for the dead—the use of stone is its correlate—is, of course, above all dependent upon the belief in the immeasurably continued material existence of the dead, in accordance with primitive views. The human impulse for self-preservation and the exigencies of human thought have always constrained men to deny the discontinuity of life and death, and to regard the dead merely as one living under special circumstances,[43] but whilst in higher stages of development this conception becomes sublimated into a belief in the immortality *of the soul*, primitive naturalism of necessity thinks of a complete continued existence of all the materials of which life is compounded. The cult of the dead which arises under these circumstances is accordingly of quite a different essential complexion from that of the piety agreeable to our notions. Instead of the freedom of ideas of our expressions of piety, those of this early stage are under a strong constraint. The departed has clear rights and claims, and they must be listened to for the reason that he has at his disposal means of forcing them from the living. For the dead is more powerful than the living. The difference in the nature of his form of existence assumes for the living the phantom shape of the superiority of that form of existence, at least in the sense that the dead is equipped with darker and greater powers. If then the dead is honoured and protected by the living, this is not because he is weaker but because he is stronger. The word "protection" is therefore not really apposite, because it cannot be used of one that is stronger; this apparent protection is really service. The dead is served by being afforded protection in the way of a dwelling of the greatest possible durability and security, and it is inherent in the relationship of dependence of a weaker on a stronger that this protection has a double aspect: it is not only protection of the

dead but also protection from the dead. To express it quite sentimentally —the dead, who with his dark powers is a standing menace to the living, must not come back. Masses of stone are heaped above him so that he may remain in the depths to which he has gone. " Love and reverence for the dead, fear of them and ' pious fraud ' have regulated in all peoples and at all times the usages and customs of burial and the cult of the dead, and have created the most remarkable precautionary measures against the return of the dead. But no people on earth have brought their cult of the dead to such a pitch of development in this respect as the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom. Nowhere has everything been so carefully protected for them, nowhere, on the other hand, has pious fraud been so extensively practised as in these tombs. It invented sham portals and stone vases made for show. It spread around models of gifts and viands made of stone and stone water flowing from models of urns. It gave the dead in appearance complete liberty to go in and out of the tomb, but only to his image, embedded fast in stone, in low or countersunk relief. The freer and more movable statue, in which was hidden away the life of the dead, which was treated like the living man himself, with burning of incense and fanning—this was carefully shut up in a dark, fast, walled-up room and allowed only a small chink for looking out into the chamber devoted to its cult. The corpse, for the preservation of which every means was employed, was tightly swathed in wrappings and laid in heavy coffins of wood or stone. These were sunk deep below the earth, and above them were heaped the masses of stone of a *mastaba*—and yet these coffins had eyes painted on them so that the dead could see and a little door from which it was hoped that he would *not* go in and out! His cult-chamber was provided with portals so that he could enter it if he wished, but these portals consisted of a door-frame only, so that the door proper could only be called a chink, and even this was not enough—the chamber was built entirely of stone, and an impenetrable wall stood between the dead and the living." [44]

Thus these inseparably interwoven conceptions, security from the living and security from the dead, give rise to a demand for architectural durability and accordingly inaugurate the history of monumental architecture. For durability is a term that does not belong to the world of the living. An outlook which required durability in building and con-

sequently stone, and that in its most convincing form of the megalith, could only be the outcome of a cult of the dead. To the idea of eternity of the contents of the tomb corresponded the notion of making the tomb-structure itself a monument of this eternity, and this notion could only find fulfilment in inanimate stone. The word " eternal," however, ought really to be rejected in this connection, as it begins to bestow upon the actual facts a dangerously poetical complexion. The correct word instead of " eternity," which has already too modern a tincture in the ideas associated with it, is perhaps the harsher and more objective word " enduringness."

By laying bare in the cult of the dead the deepest roots of the urge to architectural monumentality, we expose ourselves, it is true, to the temptation of reducing to somewhat too simple a formula the complexity of such phenomena. The splitting up of the notion of security into a transitive and an intransitive form—" secure " and " secure against "—shows indeed that we have always to reckon with a multiplicity of root conceptions. Out of all these various root conceptions contributing to the totality of the phenomenon there is still one to be mentioned as being of the greatest consequence, leading to a kind of change of significance in the stone monuments. Let us proceed from the assumption that every artefact of stone erected above a place of burial represents a hill artificially produced and made enduring, and actually intended to imitate those natural hills which were indeed the places of security provided for the dead by nature, and were utilized accordingly by means of cavities deeply dug into them; then immediately in these natural and artificial hills a double significance arises. They can be read so to speak in different directions—either from above downwards or from below upwards. The hill either sinks down upon the grave as a burdening and protecting mass or rises above it as an upward-striving movement; in other words, elements of the cult of the dead mingle with elements of the cult of heights and mountains. The religious interpretation of elevation is part of the heritage of mankind. What is nearest to the sky and the sunlight penetrates most deeply into the sphere of the divine, becoming the place upon which the gods descend. Throughout the whole cult of high places we find a uniform connection of relationships of this kind, whether expressed in the natural form of the mountain-cult or in the

artificial form of the erection for cult purposes of isolated stone monuments—menhirs, pillars, columns, pyramids, or obelisks. The limitation of this notion to the cult of the dead was a very natural one. In so far as this cult is permeated with animistic conceptions, it is the culmination of an exaltation of the ordained point of connection between the divine and human spheres, that is to say, the spot from which the gods step down amongst men coincides with the place from which men ascend to the gods; in other words, the height not only becomes the seat of the gods, but also, in places where artificially or naturally it rises above the grave, the seat of the soul. In the conception of the soul-bird so widely prevalent, especially in Ancient Egypt,[45] the seat of the winged embodiment of the soul is thought of as being on the summit of these elevations. Similar conceptions seem indeed also to be the basis of the " soul-orifice " found in prehistoric dolmen structures and perpetuated in historical times in the sham portal of the Egyptian tomb-system. If the soul of the departed, stepping out from this sham portal, seeks for a resting-place, the summit of the elevation rising above the subterranean tomb is the appointed spot. We have also to reckon with the likelihood that the summits of the Pyramids were gilded or else had a polished basalt apex.[46] This interfusion of the cult of the dead and a cult of high places merging into a cult of the sun is here most strongly marked; for the height is the point which catches the first rays of the sun, it is true, but it is also the point at which the soul of the dead can make its way into the nearest proximity to the sacred world of sun and light. Upon the gleaming polished apex of one of the Pyramids was found this inscription: " The eyes of King Amenemhat have been opened, he beholds the Lord of the Horizon travelling through the heavens. Amenemhat beholds the beauty of the sun." The moment this inscription begins to have meaning, the pyramid no longer merely spreads itself downwards as a tremendous expedient for the security of the dead in accordance with its original genesis, but is conceived in the opposite direction as a kind of ladder leading to heaven. If we wished to anticipate later conceptions, we might say that the apex of an elevation is the meeting-point of divine condescension and human ascension or resurrection. This is the double aspect of every cult of high places; and this two-fold idea seems to be served in the early, germinating stage by the very juxtaposition of dolmen and men-

hirs found in prehistoric times. To-day we can no longer read with ease these writings in stone, but we are probably not mistaken in divining that the tale they have to tell in the profound accents of primordial speech is that of the ultimate and eternal polarity of all human existence, of life and death, cult of the sun and cult of the dead. These two cults the world has to thank for the origin of monuments in stone. Our contention is this, that the great stone monuments of Egypt trace back to this prehistoric megalithic manner of construction as the moment in which monumental activity really came into being. " We may point out the similarity between this Egyptian pillar architecture and that of the English prehistoric stone circles. Even in details of technique there are parallels. This relationship confirms for us the nearness of the buildings of Chephren to primitive prehistoric art." [47] Woermann also [48] speaks of the Pyramids as " tombs of heroes turned into stone, crystallized into regular stereometric form." Or take another confirmation: " The culture of Africa Minor (that is the ancient Hamitic Africa before the age of oasis formation) was at the top of the prehistoric swing of the pendulum of culture from West to East, that of Egypt (the great oasis-formation in the desert) came in the period of the later swing from East to West. And yet the grandeur of Egyptian culture is due to its belonging to Africa and to its lineal descent from the Stone Age. This is best seen when architecture is considered. In tomb-building the Egyptian forms and those of ' Africa Minor ' start with the same construction." [49] If, as claimed by Frobenius, the ram-headed Egyptian Jupiter Ammon is really derived from the ram-headed sun-god to be met with in ancient African rock-drawings,[50] the connection of Egyptian tradition with this Eurafrican region of neolithic prehistoric culture would be clear not only in the cult of the dead, but also in the sun-cult. It seems to be definitely established that worship of the sun was known to the ancient Hamitic culture.[51]

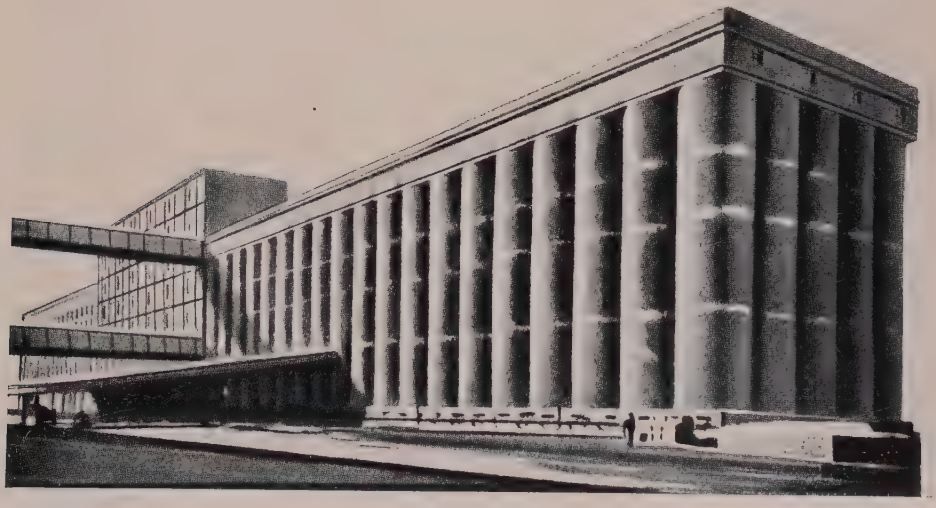
We must not lose sight of the fact that the whole megalithic type of building has accordingly a double character. In so far as it belongs to the cult of the dead, it has a gloomy magnificence. " In the ancient Hamitic culture stone, in the childhood of architecture, is without doubt the expression of gloom. Stone is gloomy and, like its nature, inanimate." [52] It is the later introduction of the cult of high places and of the sun that first gives it a partial change of character to that of brightness.

In all these investigations we have one concern, the discovery of the atavistic root of Egyptian monumental architecture. With its great decisive motives it goes back to a submerged primitive period of which the megalithic manner of building can be traced far back into that Eurafrican cultural group, the prehistoric importance of which has been forcing itself ever more insistently upon the attention of recent research. It is the primitive ideas of the monumental in architecture which are carried on from this myth-creating early age into the oasis-like high culture of Egyptian life. For this fact must be kept steadily in view—only a people of myth-creators is also capable of creating architecture in the grand sense. Colossal utilitarian architecture of great form may also come into existence in spheres of civilization poor in myths, but a trueborn and free monumental style can only grow up under the pressure of a tremendous idea dominating the whole of life. This is why it is nevertheless false in the last resort to say that Egypt is the original home of the world's monumental building in stone; the true home looms up in the far more profound forms of the old prehistoric megalithic culture.

When these primeval processes of thinking underlying the monumental in stone were taken over into the oasis-culture of Egypt, the same development came to pass as in the adoption of all the other atavistic material from early myth-creating ages, which is preserved in this atmosphere of civilization unconducive to creation; these rudiments of a lively vitality of ideas are accounted for as a sacrosanct apriori, and, as such, introduced undeveloped into the system of the Egyptian cultural framework. As soon as they are taken up into it, they are no longer a living form capable of further development but an unalterable formula; and if, like all Egyptian art, Egyptian architecture in particular owes its effect to its uniformity and finality, this is due not least to the fact that it limits itself to a continuous, absolutely unswerving maintenance, in a spirit of conservation—and this word has a different shade of meaning from that implied in " conservative "—of these two decisive fundamental motives. Formulas beget uniformity more readily than forms.

Of the aprioris adopted, without development, by the Egyptian architectural system, one above all calls for mention, namely, the gigantic character of the monumental buildings. In every other culture connected with early ages, we are conscious that by vital elaboration of the primitive

21. GATE-BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF THE DEAD OF KING SAHU-RA



22. GRAIN-ELEVATOR IN CANADA

constructional ideas, it gradually substitutes for their inherent dimensional and material vastness dimensions of *inner* form, making it possible to a certain extent to forgo lavishness in *external* size. In the course of the evolution of culture, the phenomena assume a moderateness of size in which outward and inward import are evenly balanced. Certainly in the case of a thin-blooded artificial product like the oasis-culture of Egypt, one would have expected that it would have adapted itself in things architectural to the reduced temperature of its feeling for existence, but this would have only been the case if the things in question had been capable of development and not established in a code of formulas. As it was, however, they became in their original atavistic form a law for all time, and in the midst of the frail intimacy of Egyptian culture monuments stand up abruptly which are an exposition, in a permanent form knowing neither time nor development, of the monumental in mass and dimension as conceived in the earliest times.

But the gigantic character of Egyptian architecture as a phenomenon is not exclusively a mummification of the grandeur of early times, but is partly made up also of a craving for the colossal, of which the first symptoms are to be found in quite another direction. I am referring to what we designate sociologically as Americanism. There is an immoderation belonging to pre-civilization and an immoderation of over-civilization, an immoderation due to fullness of experience and an immoderation due to poverty of experience, and, even though it be from different causes, they are alike in their over-estimation of the colossal. If this primitive, strongly rooted, colossal quality is a natural product of vital feeling at its highest tension, a tension finding organic relief in the utmost exertion of physical effort outwards, the late form of this quality is on the contrary a substitute for a tension of vital feeling which has been lost. Civilization without great underlying ideas stupefies itself in a display of external greatness, and is supported in doing so by the mass-impulse of existence under civilized conditions, which leads in a purely mechanical and automatic manner to an increase of size regulated by no inward measure. The word " mass-impulse " is here chosen deliberately because " collective impulse " has too organically vital a sound for the rigid linear framework of the sociological structure of Egyptian and American existence. Only mass as a sociological factor seeks its equivalent in an

augmentation of external mass; and mass in this sense is a cultural or civilized advanced product which only quite superficial vision can identify with the forms of aboriginal or primitive monumental mass.

The colossal therefore, in its elementary or atavistic and in its American form, is what confronts us in the giant character of Egyptian architectural form—the elementary form exuberant with the natural luxuriance of the idea of size, the American form a cold representative megalomania, the whole imposing splendour of which serves at bottom only to cloak an emptiness of ideas under " record " manifestations of materialism.

The elementary or natural aspect of the matter eludes our historical observation in the Egyptian case chiefly through the transformation into the abstract which the original architectural conception here undergoes. Its most conspicuous and, from the point of view of evolutionary history, most momentous phenomenon is rectangularity, especially rectangularity of architectural ground-plan. Once again we are confronted by a fact in the presence of which our inadequately developed historical consciousness is entirely unimpressed and indifferent, because it regards this fact as something obvious and, as it were, in accordance with the course of nature, although it is nothing of the kind. In reality this obviousness of the rectangular plan has come about in the course of history, and is by no means original. The scientific dispute as to the priority in time of the round or the rectangular house-plan has not yet, it is true, come to any final decision, and perhaps indeed never can be brought to such a decision, because the enquiry with which it started is too susceptible of alternative points of view; but it is nevertheless no accident that a thorough investigation of the prehistoric and early historical material shows the circular plan to have been far more widely distributed.[53] Anyhow, the feeling that here in the round hut we are nearer to the natural form of the dwelling-house is surely not deceiving us. Anyone who surveys the region of early culture gets the impression that the square ground-plan has rather the character of an exception which may, it is true, go back into the earliest times, but always owes its origin to special conditions. Such peculiar circumstances deviating from the natural form of conglomerate dwellings are to be found for example in horizontal timber construction, the prescribed method of building especially for the pile dwelling, which is always quadrangular.[54] Yet it would be over hasty, on the strength of this

fact, to bring horizontal timber construction into a definite genetic connection with the quadrangular plan, for the frequent use of the circular form in timber buildings also is against this.[55] Here as well it is of no use except with reservations to explain origins by arguments from material and technique.

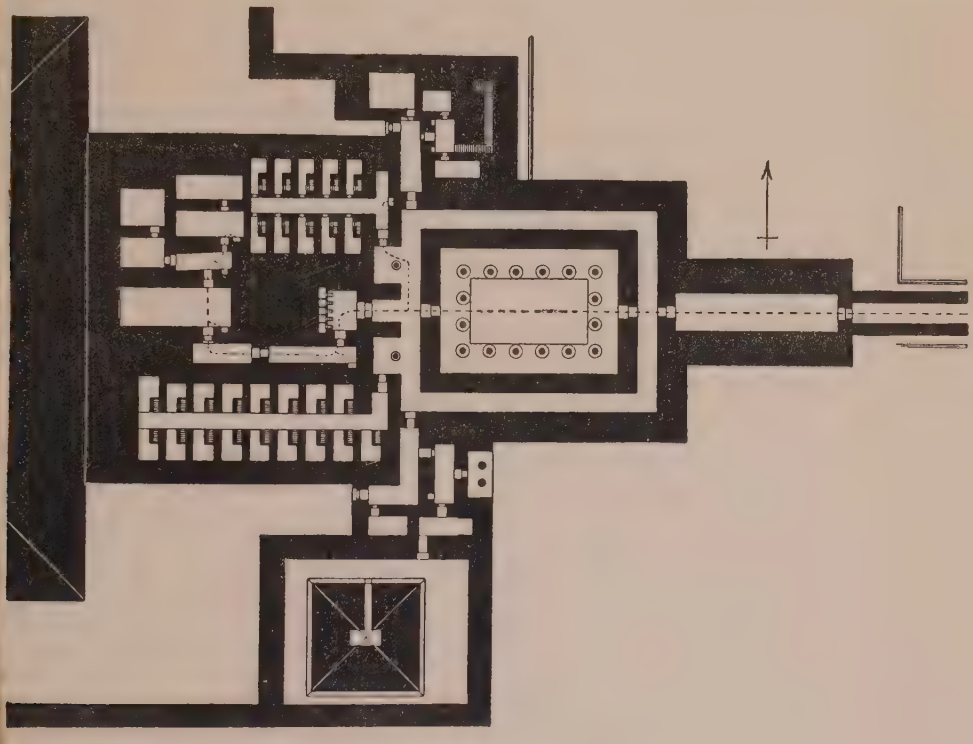
If therefore the question remains still unsettled so far as any generalization is concerned, for Egypt it can be established with tolerable certainty that the rectangular form of plan was not indigenous there. " The oldest type of house in Egypt was the round hut." [56] This is true at least of the ancient Hamitic parent soil of Egyptian culture, which can be traced back, as we must make clear again and again, to that connected cultural group of Western Europe and Africa Minor, which is the chief region of distribution of the circular structure, and from which it reappeared in historical times down to the period of the Mycenaean *tholos*-structures. Clay models of round huts and representations in reliefs prove that the circular structure was the indigenous form in Egypt also.

If, however, our feeling is correct that the circular structure, quite apart from any technical motives for its invention, represents the stage of a greater nearness to nature and immediacy in the structural disposition, we cannot wonder that the Ancient Egyptian oasis-culture immediately breaks with this intimate tradition and adopts the rectangular form of plan. Even Predynastic fortresses—it is significant that this transition is first clearly marked not by buildings for private life, but by utilitarian structures of a military technical character—show a pronouncedly rectangular form.[57] And so the rectangular ground-plan is in general definitely and lastingly prescribed for Egypt in historical times. Even if all architectural evidence were lost to us, we should still know that this is so, for the hieroglyphic symbols for " house " consist of a rectangular figure.

Materialistic explanations are of no avail in settling the question of the grounds for this decisive transition to the rectangular plan. The assumption to which I have referred of an original connection between the rectangular form and horizontal timber construction here certainly breaks down, for in a country so poor in timber as Egypt, it is impossible that this material could have shown the way to be followed by the building instinct. Here the building instinct went its way independently and decided in favour of the one form most conformable with the whole

spirit of this high culture of the oasis, divorced from nature, namely, the form of rigid, rectangular, straight-lined figures. It is the will to abstract clarity and definition that departs from the circular structure with its organically vital character, warm as it were with the warmth of nature, and substitutes for it the artificiality of the orthogonal system—" absolute dominance of the right angle, not only in the ground-plan but also in the superstructure." [58] The phenomenon which here makes its appearance and becomes, as a result of the dominating character of Egyptian monumental architecture, of great consequence in the history of the world, is the unqualified victory, as regards construction, of the rationalism of civilization over all the attributes of natural growth in the formation of the ground-plan. The shortest line between two points is explained by this rational objectivity as being the only legitimate and sensible one. The decisiveness with which this victory of architectural commonsense over architectural sensuousness is proclaimed in Egypt becomes an event in the history of architecture of unparalleled significance for all future ages. Our historical consciousness has kept silence about the eventfulness of this process only because it first steps in just at this point in the evolution and in its shortsightedness takes this point for an absolute starting-point. To Ludwig Curtius belongs the merit of having underlined with all emphasis " the immeasurable significance for the whole history of architecture throughout the world of these first Egyptian formulations of fundamental architectural ideas." [59] It was he who first had the feeling, with all it includes, that the monumental conditions which made the Egyptian system the prototype of all further development of construction for hieratic or grandiose purposes were to be found in the encounter of this great architectural objectivity with that employment of stone in the great style. It is something tremendously simple and obvious that is expressed in the lay-out of the plan in Egyptian temple architecture; but how all the irrationality of natural life must have died down to allow this extreme simplicity to come into being! Only to a people widely divorced from nature was it possible to utter the first word in the programme of this will to cold architectural objectivity, a word of which the convincing power could never again be abated from the moment when it had been spoken in all its obviousness. The air is thin, certainly, which blows around this momentous architec-

tural programme, and the sight of these plans, so strong in their lines and sure of themselves, has a somewhat chilling effect, but such thinking, in architecture, along straight lines was only possible in a thin air like this, in which all possibility of resistance from natural fancy was excluded. Thus it is the thin air of the Egyptian oasis-culture to which the architec-



TEMPLE OF THE DEAD OF SAHU-RA

tural culture of the world owes those apparently elementary forms of architectural thinking, which are in reality forms of the utmost artificiality. Although rectangular ground-plans may occur in isolation in other places also in early times, they were first reduced to the official form of monumental art, and thus to a traditional construction with universal historical continuity, by the consistency with which Egyptian architecture employs them as the deciding constituent in their logically determined system (compare the figure in the text).

The ruins of a city called Kahun, belonging to the period of the Middle Kingdom, have been dug out, and confront us with the astonishing fact that there were in Egypt artificial cities,[60] that is to say, cities which did not grow up gradually by a natural process of growth, but were set up in the desert all at once by royal command as a thing complete. This fact must be given threefold emphasis, for the Americanism of this Egyptian high culture could not possibly be demonstrated more clearly than by this proof of the creation of ready-made artificial cities. It is a case of the city not as a living entity of natural upgrowth, but as a constructed artefact!

We are here concerned with this Egyptian abnormality only because it displays in its highest potency the Egyptian aptitude for an abstract concentration of the details of a building to form one whole. Only those who have become clearly aware, in the presence of this most striking example of a complete town plan well—even coldly—set out, of the exceptional nature of such an aptitude for arrangement, or rather, of such a will to comprehensive arrangement, will have their eyes opened to the extraordinary resolution implied by the connection, in a compactly coherent formation of the ground-plan, of the many compartments required in the lay-out of a temple. We must not look upon these studiedly uniform temple-dispositions as something that comes about as a matter of course, any more than we should regard as such a town plan laid out after a uniform design, even though they have become for us, through all the later evolution, a phenomenon familiar and therefore taken for granted. This which we take so much for granted had at some time to become by a great resolution a model achievement, and this happened in Egypt under the earliest dynasties. It was, of course, the outcome of preliminary stages to be found in the articulation of the simple dwelling-house [61]—in fact, the articulation of the dwelling of the gods was only an enhancement and extension in a monumental direction of the principles of articulation for which the way had already been cleared in the human dwelling; but the many-membered and yet uniform ground-plans of the earlier temple structures, as they lie before us, leave far behind them, in their grandeur and consistency, these embryonic formations that preceded them, and represent for us an entirely new and in itself already quite mature fact, from the fundamental idea of which, once so decisively and

convincingly expressed, the subsequent centuries of Egyptian architectural development allowed themselves to depart only in insignificant variations. These early temple dispositions therefore stand once again, as it were, as an apriori at the beginning of Egyptian architectural history, and it must be repeated that this apriori owes its origin not to an architectural sensibility derived from nature and capable of vital development, but to the emergence of a cold logic of architectural thinking which could set down its abstract lines so majestically and decisively only in the vacuum of a civilized artificial state of existence. In other words, it is here again relevant to observe the touch of Americanism which will not allow the countless subdivisions of the space to group themselves together automatically, in compliance with the laws of an interpenetration and juxtaposition of gradual growth controlled by purpose, but subordinates them in advance to the abstract dictates of a pre-existing general plan which completely abolishes their independence as organic units. Under these circumstances there comes into existence not a natural network of cells, but a crystalline formation of cells determined by their purpose. It is the cold region of a supreme geometricalism which brings about this stupendous process of petrifaction. This process also we must not estimate as a product of synthetic power such as we rightly detect in the ground-plan formations of other periods of architecture; in this case it is a question of the steady precipitation, on cooling, of a temperamental attitude towards construction which has become absolutely inaccessible to the vital claims of the spiritual nature—or the natural soul—of the single-roomed structure and its natural outgrowth, and therefore neutralizes this structure in an appropriate geometricalism. Egyptian ground-plans possess a finished form in being, but not a form in process of becoming, and the breath of synthetic vitality is to be found only where a form in process of becoming has come to rest in a form in being. In Egypt this earlier history is lacking. We have failed to recognize this fact because we are accustomed to read all ground-plans in a Greek or modern translation, that is, we introduce into all ground-plan foundations alike a definite preconception of architectural sensuousness and, to adopt a musical phrase, read them by the same signature. But in the Egyptian column there is no trace of the swelling or entasis of the Greek column—for the swelling, with a naturalistically imitative intention, on the shaft

of the papyrus-column has quite a different meaning; and just as little are we entitled to read into the abstract system of an Egyptian ground-plan any trace of the vital breathing of a realization of synthetic power. This is an idea to which we have become accustomed from Greek or Roman plan-formations or indeed actually, for the first time, in ultimate determination, in those of the Baroque period. In this matter it is a question of distinguishing, by their inner essential colouring, phenomena which are externally alike in structure.

Ludwig Curtius explains, in fine words, the fact that in these Egyptian giant temples, for the first time in history, " noble and sumptuous apartments in harmony with an enhanced feeling for life come into being." [62] He starts with the view that every impulse towards monumental architecture is dominated by the urge to proclaim in great words of stone the highest conception of vital form belonging to the people in question. Monumental architecture is not a direct reflection of the actuality of a people, but a reflection of their highest potentialities as they wish them to be. If ever the inadequacy of human realism has been overcome in ideal emergent form, it would be in this great stone representation-form of the most highly sublimated life-feeling.

One feels a certain compunction about applying to the case of Egypt this fine and just view of monumental architecture. The word " life " has too emphatic a sound in these definitions not to conflict with our general conception of the essential nature of Egypt. We cannot help glancing back again and again at the Pyramids; if our view is right, that their cold geometricalism is not a gigantic expression of tension of life-feeling or death-feeling (the same thing with inversion of the " signature ")—but a neutral condition beyond all tension of life or death, then there cannot be in the temple architecture in its entirety, of which the pyramid is the focus, anything of this romanticism of an enhanced life-feeling. In that case every interpretation of the cadence of the architectural language which hears in it a special, functionally effective vital accent is false. Yet our contention is this, that this geometrical definiteness and objectivity represents precisely a process of petrifaction of all organic vitality, a process which sets in of necessity at the moment when the zero point is passed between culture of natural growth and the artificial breed of the oasis.

If misplaced romantic conceptions of an ideal autonomy of architectural expression are ruled out, the Egyptian temple lay-out displays itself as a processional road in stone with a structure determined entirely by ritual procedure. We must make a careful distinction; these buildings are not an architectural symbolization of the fundamental idea contained in the ritual, but only the immediate architectural precipitate of the external conditions of the ritual. Those who know will observe that we are here refuting especially Spengler's attempt to give profundity to the Egyptian architectural idea. We may here quote the significant points of his romantic account of Egyptian Americanism: " The Egyptian soul beheld itself a wanderer on a narrow and inexorably prescribed way of life. This was its idea of destiny. The existence of the Egyptian is that of a wanderer; the entire form-language of his culture serves as an illustration of this one motive. His primeval symbol can best be made perceptible by means of the word ' way.' The statue with its solemn forward stride, the endless passages of the pyramid-temple, ranged in strict sequence, leading darkly and ever becoming narrower through halls and courts to the sepulchral chamber, the alleys of sphinxes, the cycles of reliefs on the temple walls past which the beholder must walk, always accompanying him and leading him in a definite direction—all represent the depth-experience of a peculiar type of humanity, Egyptian destiny in its stern inevitableness."

Spengler here gives to the strongly and objectively regulated system of canalization of the Egyptian methods of laying out spaces a significance of depth which is explained by his entire over-estimation of the Egyptian cultural attainment—" there is no culture of higher spiritual power," " this is a metaphysics in stone beside which written (Kantian) metaphysics has the effect of a helpless stammering "—and which we must combat from our opposed general point of view. It is true that in this cleverly unified and systematized maze of rooms and corridors everything is merely way, but this way is the way of a ritual procedure stereotyped in formulas, not the way of a metaphysical idea with a symbolic undertone —fitness for purpose crystallized to the last degree in stone and not idea crystallized in stone. And here we have the old Egyptian antithesis between the ideological material, of no great value, of this ritual procedure, serving in the last resort, in spite of all over-refinement of formula, a

cult of the dead of very massive and religiously unexalted conceptions, and the objective formation, of high logical standing, given to this procedure in architecture. It is the juxtaposition of occultism and Americanism which, according to our view, runs through the whole superculture of Egypt.

In the same connection the rhythmic quality of the sequence of the separate temple spaces has been spoken of, and with the precise implication that an idea of a transference to the architectonic structure of the human movement passing through these spaces, underlies the architectural disposition of the spaces. But in our opinion there is no need to deduce from the proportional character of the formation of the plan, determined on purely geometrical and purposive lines, so organic an element as movement made rhythmical. The series of spaces is calculated with the help of the builder's square, but they are not permeated with a vital rhythm. Just as the procession of celebrants moves with a monotonous, measured pace, liberated as it were from time and space, so also the building in which this movement is contained is neutralized in a state beyond temporal and spatial vitality.

Critics have repeatedly seen in Egyptian architecture the realization of the ideal of a " pure architecture "; [63] if it has any title to this estimation, it consists in its cold geometrical aloofness from all constructive sensibility which would vitalize it and therefore do away with the abstract self-sufficiency of architectonic consistency. Egyptian architecture really yields, of all the potentialities of building, only the abstract, fundamental tectonic law, but it yields it in a pure culture, naked and sublime, which enters into the clearest and most convincing association imaginable with a regard, equally unencumbered by feeling, for ideas of practical purpose.

Nevertheless we are now confronted with a new problem. This spirit of purely abstract architectonics is violated at one of the most important and most obvious points of the structural whole; there comes into being —comprehensible in a monumental form for the first time in the buildings of the 3rd Dynasty (as demonstrated by new discoveries at Saqqarah)— the Egyptian plant-column, driving out the angular pillar, the only legitimate structural member conformable with an abstract structural spirit (fig. 23). In other words, the very architecture which up to that

23. GRANITE PALM-COLUMNS IN THE TEMPLE OF THE DEAD OF SAHU-RA

point has observed the canon of purely tectonic abstraction in paradigmatic purity, for once adopts a structural member which, in its immediate relationship to plant life, sins in the grossest conceivable manner against all the sensibilities of purely architectonic language. It is as though an element from the visible living world were for once introduced into the system of symbols of a geometrical treatise. A heterogeneous note appears in the language, and from this discord, with all its monstrosity, Egyptian architecture never broke away.

If we seek for the root causes of this cleavage in the language, so pregnant of results for all after ages, we come to recognize that the plant-column, the chief element in a scheme of monumental splendour, has its origin in the very opposite pole to the monumental, that is, in the homely.

A relief from the tomb of a high priest of Memphis,[64] first recognized by H. Schaefer in its important bearing upon our question, shows a procession of mourners at an Egyptian funeral, and provides us with evidence of the custom of improvising by the wayside light structures made of branches for setting out offerings to the dead. These frail and transient makeshift erections were put up in the lightest conceivable manner. A few big stems of plants are stuck in the ground, and a few light mats stretched between them, and there you have a kind of graceful baldacchino.

Imagine these most fragile and poetical of all huts with their trivial loveliness and lightness in the midst of the silent coldness of the great Egyptian buildings, and you have at once a visible presentment of the polarity permeating Egyptian existence. For Egyptian culture is massive only in its official utterances; in its more intimate forms of expression it is of an absolutely Japanese lightness. It has been stated elsewhere that in Egypt there are only two kinds of sculpture, sculpture on the grand scale and miniature sculpture, excessive heaviness and the most trivial delicacy. The mean of a culture balanced in itself is always wanting. The mistake of earlier research, of tracing back these irreconcilable qualities of monumentality and homeliness in Egyptian art to a difference between the art of the court and the art of the people, only seeks to explain a just observation by a false interpretation.

In literature also the two phenomena are found in abrupt juxtaposition —either the strictest, most rigid ritual—a cold geometricalism of artificial

religious formulas—or the most unconstrained lyricism. Here again the epic mean is lacking.

It is part of the same process of ideas that Egyptian culture is thoroughly masculine in its official utterances, whilst its intimate family life was entirely devoid of this one-sided complexion, giving on the contrary the widest room for the feminine and childish touch to come into play. Mention has already been made of the fact that here also the comparison with American conditions gives the sociological key to this cleavage between the conventional culture of public life and the unconstrained culture of the home.

It is indeed of the very essence of artificially constructed cultures that an organic transition from the sphere of the home to that of public life is lacking. There is in them no organic growth of the home sphere in the sense that even the most advanced monumental quality is in the last resort only the rudimentary home constructions of a prehistoric stage carried to a climax. The monumental and the homely differ in these cultures not in degree but in kind, and this for the very reason that the sociological conditions of a highly forced civilization make inevitable the addition of an artificial superstructure no longer standing in any relationship whatever, in the conditions imposed by its formation, to the narrow basis of natural data laid down as a sure foundation in the sphere of intimate domestic life; and the higher the artificial fabric of civilization grows under the compelling conditions of oasis-existence, the slighter becomes the connection between the abstract schematism of this conventionalized mass-impulse and the organic law of life requiring structures of an intimate nature in which to realize itself. The consequence of this is an isolation and sealing up of the life of the home in a world of its own apart. The bridge of potential intercourse breaks down hopelessly. Only one form of relationship is left; under the pressure of the contrast in which it stands with public life, the life of the home takes on a certain hot-house character and advances even some degrees further in delicacy. In short, the lyric element in life puts forth blooms of a trivial delicacy because every means of intercourse with public life is wanting. Delicate arbours made of the stalks of flowers stand unrelatedly side by side with colossal official buildings constructed of giant blocks of stone. There is no intervening layer.

It is owing to their frailty and transitoriness that these expressions of intimate culture withdraw completely into the background in our conception of Egypt, and that only the recollection of the massive character of the public life of Egypt remains impressed upon our minds. Against the utterance of the monumental remains, the slight contradictory voices—to be deduced in some measure from the representations in the reliefs—which produce in our historical experience an echo of Egyptian doings are ineffectual. Here let us bear in mind above all a historical recollection. Anyone who has been concerned with the turn of destiny at the end of the antique period knows the part played by Alexandria, the metropolis of Hellenistic culture, in the centuries in question. What kind of character is stamped by Alexandria upon the taste of the Graeco-Roman world-empire? The answer to this question is given us by the Pompeian wall-paintings, the early Christian frescoes of the Catacombs, by bucolic-idyllic poetry and not for the last time by their reflex in early Christian iconography. An entire atmosphere of lyricism due to the most graceful refinement of taste, full of played-out dalliance, sentimentality, and pampered tender-heartedness, flows out into the ancient world from this over-cultivation of the luxury of a great city. Here in Alexandria is distilled that subtlest essence of the utmost refinement of civilization, which communicates itself like a delicate fragrance to the whole length and breadth of late antique life. Everything that contributes to the universal culture of the Roman-Hellenistic age the light accent of a dallying, graceful rococo has its place of origin in this dominating centre of fashion and taste on Egyptian soil. In the vast great-city formation of Alexandria is concentrated once again the destined rôle played in earlier ages by Egypt as a whole, that of being an artificial oasis-formation, affecting all the neighbouring lands with the fascination of a high culture carried to the limits of artificial refinement. The Pharos of Alexandria is in this connection really symbolic. Even the Hellenistic varnish of the Alexandrian metropolis does not alter the fact that this hyper-civilization with all its accompanying phenomena is the last word of pre-Hellenistic Egypt,the chief instance of the oasis in the history of the world. Just those two elements which make up Alexandrianism as a culture—on the one hand, encyclopaedic deterioration of science in activities of philological conservation (the library of Alexandria was the greatest

science museum in the ancient world), on the other hand, deterioration of art in a slight, decorative play productive only of charm and deprived of all power of creative action—these elements make of Alexandria the most genuine final chord of the specifically Egyptian past. It is true that the classical world took over also the official externals of Egyptian culture, but it adopted them only as interesting borrowed phrases, whereas the inward infection of the classical world by the Egyptian legacy proceeded beyond a doubt from that lyrical and triflingly sentimental intimacy which, after having been throughout thousands of years the decisive element flowing beneath the surface of Egyptian art, became condensed once more in the finest of essences in the metropolis-atmosphere of Alexandria. A passage of Spengler's about the Egyptian pictorial reliefs may be quoted to confirm our recognition of these relationships. " There is no parallel to the sparkling vitality, the fullness of childlike, charming humour, of these idylls in stone of 2700 B.C., with their scenes of the chase, of fishery and pastoral life, their brawls and games, festivities, and family scenes, promenades, representations of agriculture and busy trade, recording the whole of life with the most vivid power and fullness, in the most graceful sensuousness without a single serious reflection. This is happiness, naive, brimming, unreflecting happiness." [65] If we leave undetermined the question of naivety, the fact remains of this delightful Anacreontic dalliance with the beautiful surface-happiness of life. But " the Egyptian loves nature only sentimentally, in no inquisitive, creative temper; he uses it for his enjoyment." [66]

The first three centuries after Christ are therefore still wholly impregnated with this inherited rococo spirit of Egypt, communicated through the channel of Alexandria to the whole world.

What has all this to do with the plant-columns of the early dynasties? It has to do with them because in spite of their colossal character they are not to be understood without recognizing that rococo side of Egypt which had its last effect in the history of the world, its most significant and marked effect, in Alexandrianism. The impulse for their origination also is to be found in a lyrically tempered play of decorative fancy. The spirit which constructed slight huts out of frail stalks of flowers and fine mats was the spirit which ventured with them into the realms, quite foreign to it, of architectonic geometricalism.

Let us quote Erman: "All these columns and likewise the painted designs arose, in part visibly, from the hanging of the walls with coloured mats and knotted carpets. Thence they were adopted into stone construction, and for the most part they have come down to us only in this form. Hence it cannot be too emphatically laid down that the forms of Egyptian architecture hardly ever stand to-day in the situations for which they were originally conceived. The dainty bud and flower columns were not originally intended to be carried out three and a half metres thick to a height of nineteen metres, and if in spite of this fact they make upon us at Karnak and Luxor such an ineffaceable impression, they owe it perhaps more to the power of their tremendous proportions than to the aesthetic beauty of their form." [67] Even these remarks show how much the idea of the plant-column, as form, has its early history in the intimate sphere of the activity of artistic fancy. It is as it were a poetic miniature conceit introduced, with nothing to lead up to it, into a monumental architectonic scheme. As if one wanted to make a giant mosaic out of a Japanese wash drawing.

It is part of the rococo character of Egyptian sensibility that it gives itself up with special preference to an idyllic enthusiasm for nature. Naive peoples are not such lovers of flowers as were the Egyptians.[68] On the contrary, only in a state of civilized separation from nature does this attitude of aesthetic and sentimentalizing fondness for the luxury of flowers and plants find a place. It is only in the oasis that the dweller in the desert becomes a cultivator and admirer of flowers. In this sense the whole language of the East, with its wealth of flowers, is ultimately not the mirrored image of tropical actuality, but the reflex of the desert-dweller's longing for the wealth of plant life developed only by the methods of the hot-house in the oasis where water and human agencies create a half artificial paradise in the midst of the parched soil of the desert.

Of course it would be too much to say that it was sheer luxurious affectation of nature and flowers that led to that toying with imitations of plants which at last forced its way actually into architecture. No, practical and religious significance plays its part in this preference, side by side with, or rather in its genesis inseparably bound up with, the aesthetic significance of certain favourite plants. All this is so complex that it will not do to isolate one single significance. Indeed, the aesthetic significance is

in any case only a remnant left behind when the preceding history of the connected functions of practical and religious significance has withdrawn into the region of the subconscious. In the history of evolution independent aestheticism is always only a final reverberation.

It is therefore even impossible to penetrate into the complex body of impulses which contributed their accents to the translation of the plant elements into the language of architectural form. If we can trust the testimonies of later time, a definite general idea of a religious complexion is certainly at the root of the matter, an idea, however, which, for all we know, may sum up the results of a complex of facts belonging in their origin to a different category. It is hardly to be assumed that it is a primary idea. The content of this fundamental idea is known; we are concerned with an idea, wavering to and fro between naturalism and symbolism, of the reflection of natural space in artificial space; that is to say, the artificial floor symbolizes the natural surface of the ground, the columns grow like actual plants out of this soil, and the enclosing ceiling, ornamented with flying birds or stars and suns, clearly proclaims itself by this decoration to be an image of the firmament.

Investigators who took objection to the all too naturalistic tincture of this symbolism were ready enough, with the object of rescuing the halo of Egyptian profundity of thought, to interpret anew this image of natural space as an image of space cosmically apprehended. It may be that the Egyptians themselves at a later stage thus expounded the facts in a sense of speculative theology, but surely in the original conception such highly sublimated metaphysical trains of thought were hardly the decisive factor. In refutation of this explanation, we need not go beyond the proved origin of the conception in the intimate sphere of fancy.

It would be easier for us to examine this origin and thus to arm ourselves against every speculative over-estimation of this symbolism, if we were to see the Egyptian temples still in the full splendour of their decoration. That decoration gives such full information as to the concreteness of the naturalistic ideas that one almost comes to doubt whether this imitative illusionism is entitled any more to be called symbolism at all.

If we look at a piece of pavement-painting such as that of Hawara,[69] if we read that it has been ascertained by investigation that on the lower part of columns traces of blue colour were to be found indicating the

24. PORTRAIT OF KING AMENOPHIS III
Berlin

water out of which in the periods of inundation the plant-thickets grew,[70] if we immerse ourselves in all the lavish employment of botanical accuracy which produced the formation of the various plant-columns—in the papyrus-column the imitation of nature is actually carried to the extent of reproducing exactly the triangular cross section of the papyrus, although the resultant form is as unsuitable as could be conceived for the shaft of a column[71]—our belief in a deeply-pondered speculative idea steadily dwindles, and we are left with a growing impression of a poetic toying with illusionistic elements in which the religious symbolism is only superficial. Borchardt[72] points to actual inundation-halls, that is, halls of which the decoration is based on the quite concrete representation of the flooded Nile valley: " From the foregoing it has, I hope, been sufficiently demonstrated that the ancient Egyptians thought of the plants forming their columns as actually growing out of the water, that they represented therefore a hall with plant-columns not ' *à l'image du monde*,' in a general sense, but as a copy of the world in a quite definite season of the year, of special importance for Egypt, that of the inundation. . . . For the present we have not succeeded in learning how the Egyptian architect came to decorate halls in palaces and temples in such a manner as to give an image of an inundated region. Religious ideas may have played a part in this, to the extent that such a hall was intended to reproduce the Delta swamps in which the young Horus spent his childhood, and that it was considered appropriate to repeat such decorations in palaces of the ' living Horus,' the king; or the entire scheme of decoration may perhaps be traced merely to the overpowering after-effects of the fanciful creation of some specially eminent architect of old. Probably we shall never be able to find out which surmise is true. The essential thing for us in this connection is to perceive that the Egyptian plant-column owes its origin to a purely decorative idea alone." [73]

In interpreting the form of the Egyptian plant-column the opinions of two different schools prevail. One view—that of Wilcken [74]—explains the law of its construction by assuming that the column reproduces a round stone pillar of which the decorative embellishment with plants and flowers was afterwards translated into stone; the other view—held by Borchardt amongst others—will have nothing to do with such a dualism between a nucleus in the shape of a pillar and a surface decoration

imitated in stone, but conceives the column in its entirety as a direct imitation in stone of the vegetable prototypes in question. The latter view has to-day obtained almost universal acceptance and now meets only with isolated opponents. According to this view therefore—in idea at all events—there is no juxtaposition of a supporting nucleus in stone and a plant-decoration laid about it and brought into coherent association with the stone, but the ideal function of support is actually entrusted to the feeble stems of the very plants, such as the lotus and papyrus, which, as growths of the water and the swamp, are the least suited for the purpose of all the plants one could think of. The palm-column might more justly be maintained to be apt for such a purpose, if its shaft alone were conceived as a supporting member; but the palm also is actually taken as a whole and is required to bear the heavy beams on its delicate, pliant crown, a conception which is a violation of all healthy architectural sensibility. Without doubt, for the Egyptian, the supporting function of these columns is only practical, for the very reason that they are constructed of such heavy masses of stone; for the aesthetic perception, however, every idea of a supporting function is excluded, and in its place we have that poetical pseudo-symbolic illusionism which looks upon the columns as clustered plants or tree-trunks, as the case may be, shooting up free and unburdened towards the sky represented by the ceiling. In other words, the problem of architectonic weight existed for the Egyptian only practically, not aesthetically. To the material itself he could not give too heavy a guise, but his impulse to aesthetic activity took the direction entirely of lightness, and in a truly Egyptian manner, making no attempt to reconcile two heterogeneous spheres of life, he gave these slight conceits of his intimate fancy a materialization, imposing as representation, in colossal stone shapes, weighty and oppressive. A good part of his architecture is monumentalized lyrics. The Egyptians were great story-tellers. Even their plant-columns are conceits of a story told in giant stones, words from the petrified "language of flowers" of a hot-house fancy; it is a case of prattle shouted through a megaphone.

The best proof that only the practical aspects of the supporting process were taken into account is the shamefaced formation of the intervening abacus-member, which had to be withdrawn as much as possible from the notice of the aesthetic gaze. It has indeed aesthetically nothing at all to

do with the column, but is a component part of the roof-system devoid of aesthetic significance and therefore made in as inconspicuous a form as possible, projected out by the roof to meet the columns as a practical means of contact with their actual function as a means of support. These abacus-tablets therefore are not strictly speaking *intermediaries* between burden and support; they act rather as a mere makeshift stopgap in the distressing breach which occurs at this point where the idea as aesthetically willed clashes with the underlying practical and structural facts of the case. " To the eye of an Egyptian the tall abacus was no more than the strut under the belly of a marble horse is to us, a technical necessity which the well-behaved eye does not see. The interior of the building had to be experienced not as architecture, but as poetry. The poetry of the Egyptians, however, was like that of Albrecht von Haller, Salomon Gessner, and Ewald von Kleist. Can we therefore expect understanding of space, real architecture? The lotus, lily, papyrus, palm, image of Hathor or *Ded* symbol—we may believe the Egyptologist to the letter when he tells us that no glimmer of architectural thought dawned in the brain of the Egyptian who twined these items of decoration like hangings round a supporting post." [75]

There is no need to go into the various systems of these plant-columns; here we are concerned only with the fundamental character of this member of architectonic speech, which, originating as an Egyptian speciality, became the most significant element in the whole universal language of architecture, in so far as architecture indulged in festal sublimity—whether ritual or profane. This later universal domination of a supporting member with plant-decoration is what makes the Egyptian prototype a problem worthy of such serious consideration. And it remains the great miracle of evolution that it turned the unarchitectural absurdity of this Egyptian conceit into a structural member so immediately convincing, both statically and organically, as is the classical column. The part played by the Egyptian plant-column in this evolution was, to be sure, only that of a superficial initiating signal. It is its Greek transformation which first allows us to forget what a sin against the spirit of pure architecture was involved in the conceit which originated it, namely, the mingling of the yielding nature of the plant with that autocracy of static limitations which alone accords with the true essence of architecture. As the Egyptian

column initiates this development, it signifies an inadmissible and monstrous departure from the intimate sphere of thought from which decoration springs and an encroachment upon the absolutely opposite realm of the monumental; and it accords entirely with our picture of Egypt that this encroachment takes place without any intermediate stages, and that the most widely opposed elements are combined solely by the unity of colossal presentation in stone. The transformation effected by later artist peoples in this *juxtaposition*, when once for all it had been introduced, namely, an *interpenetration* in the form of a delightful play of tension and adjustment between statically abstract and organically labile orderliness, is completely lacking in the Egyptian column; the column exhibits actually nothing but a tensionless juxtaposition of two irreconcilable categories of architectural speech. It is the same lack of inner logic which finds expression also in the contradictory architectonics of the religious and theological conceptions and yet gave no offence in Egyptian quarters. That the Egyptians were so insensitive to inner contradictions gave them, however, a great formal advantage, that of the unreflecting assurance, undisturbed by problems, of their formal procedure. With this assurance they simply make light of the antinomy of their architectural language, with the result that even to us it does not force itself on our consciousness so much as one might fairly have expected in consideration of its monstrous character. There remains always that assured consistency of rectilinearity in every formal procedure by which even the most contradictory elements are smoothly—not transformed, but—worked over. Whether it be the sacred baboon of Thoth, a piece of fetishism from the dawn of history, turned into a piece of sculpture of the utmost cubic compactness, or a bundle of marsh-plants reduced to a form of stereometric strength consistent with stone, we are in the presence of the same application of a will to form, schematically stereotyped and therefore unreflecting in its assurance, to data of content which by their very essence could not really fail to resist this abstract working-over, if this inner essence peculiar to them were still actually living and not already neutralized into a formulated semblance of life. If actual artistic productivity had been present, and, with it, tension between the various forms of expression, that assurance and precision which formally and superficially smoothes over every antinomy would never have been arrived at. The fact must again and again

be emphasized that the most fundamental condition antecedent to Egyptian sureness of style is a lack of inner sensibility for the essential quality of the things presented to it for artistic mastery. This sureness levels this essential diversity beneath the uniformity of the same formulated dogmatism of style. Sureness may mean victory, but it may also mean sheer elimination of fruitful contradictions, and this is what it means in the case of Egypt. It takes a place not above the tensions, but beyond their range, remains unaffected by them, and is therefore able to draw unhindered that shortest line between two points which is called the convention of Egyptian style, and which makes its appearance with such impressive weight of decisiveness and precision, asserts its sovereignty with such an external effect of convincingness, that every misgiving as to the inner legitimacy of this whole world of style is immediately dispelled.

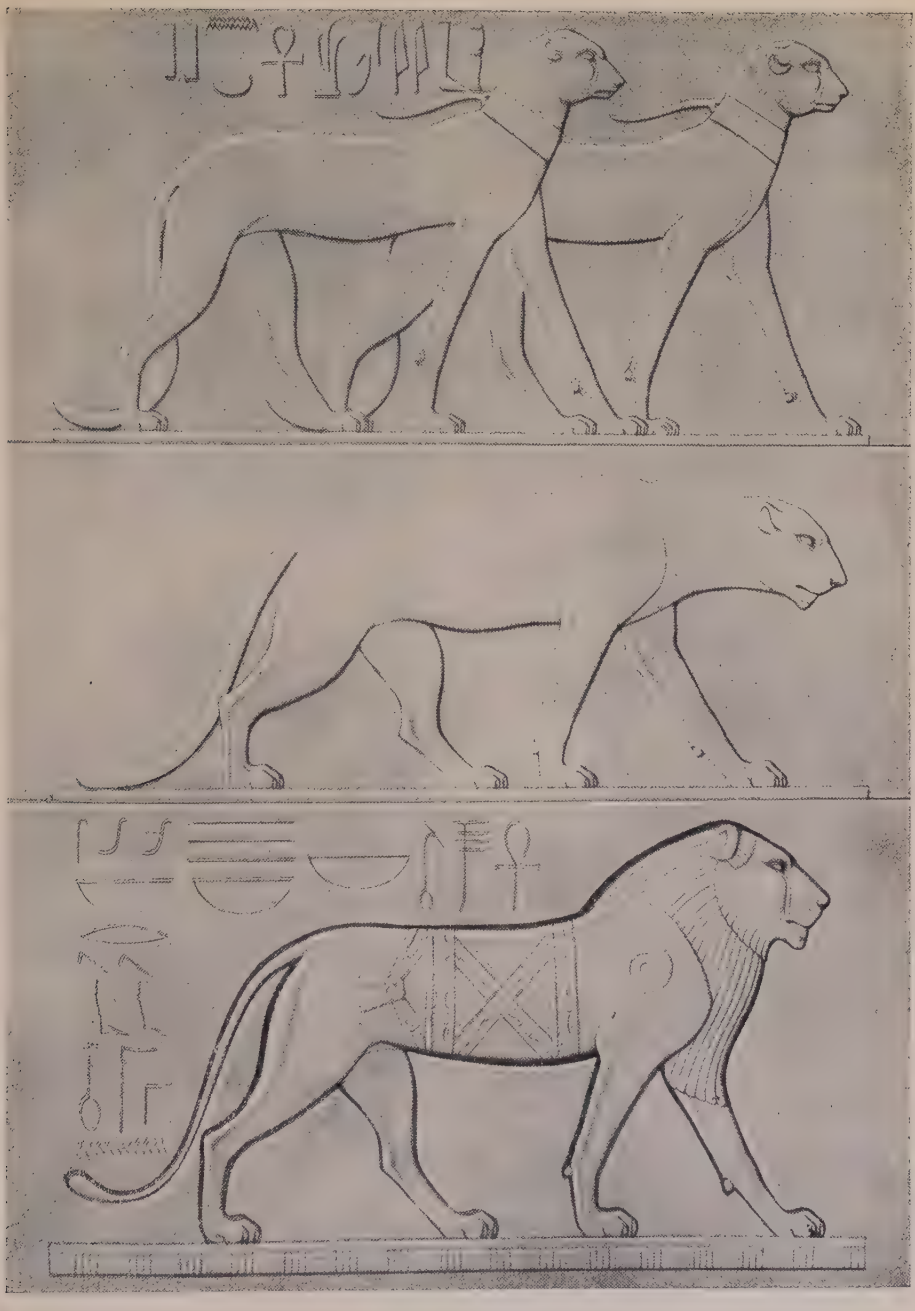
There is nothing against which we must be more on our guard than the introduction amongst the facts relating to Egyptian art of ideas which are to us customary and indispensable; this is shown amongst other things by the following consideration: we must of necessity ask ourselves how the Egyptian felt about his columns. Here there seem to be only two alternatives for us. Either he felt conscious of them with the whole insistence of their tremendous cubic mass, and thus stepped back to a suitable distance from them, or he remained insensitive to the demand for standing away from them expressed in this plastic ponderousness, and came quite close to them in order to decipher the pictorial text, as fine as a spider's web, which from top to bottom rippled over these heavy giant posts. Once again we are confronted with this juxtaposition, to us incomprehensible and abrupt, of the macroscopic and the microscopic, of massiveness and refinement, loud cubic tones and the whisper of bas-relief, of the sublimity of the desert and the delicacy of the oasis, the gigantic and the childlike.

This question of how the Egyptian felt about his columns—whether he regarded them as cubic disburdenings of the grandest style or as plastically neutral writing-tablets for a stream of chatter without any punctuation—is wrongly put, because it anticipates an answer which restores some kind of logical and organic connection between these alternatives. No, there is here also nothing but a naked, tensionless state of indifference, that is not disturbed by the dilemma by which we are

tormented, because the Egyptian is without the sensuous faculty by means of which we are accustomed to interpret artistic data on the basis of our historical education. It is therefore a lack of the aptitude for productive experience which for the Egyptian actually turns every dilemma, to us unescapable, into a matter of indifference in which no problem is involved. In this connection a parallel is offered by the culture of the modern great city, the meaningless juxtapositions of which we have indeed long lost the habit of testing by the logic of artistic sensibility for the reason that this logic is to-day only a product of the education of individuals and not an instinctive power strongly rooted in the community. Such an insensitive tolerance of inward contradictions is possible only in the artistic vacuum of civilized degeneration.

We must, of course, refrain from seeing in the massive Egyptian plant-columns the disburdening of a plastic sensuousness. "If the Egyptian had, in fact, felt as we do about his elephantine columns, that is, if he had perceived them only as pure mass, the colossal character of the bodies with which he was confronted could not fail to have been a sheer oppression to him. To use a trivial comparison, however, he was as little sensible of the weight of the columns as we are of the corporeality of an advertisement kiosk when we cast our eyes upon the placards posted upon it." [76] We must indeed always distinguish between cubic quantity and cubic quality.

And above all, stereometric definiteness is something different from plastic sense. This consideration must in our opinion be extended to the whole of Egyptian sculpture. Our enthusiasm for its great cubically compact form was really only justified so long as we saw an achievement of synthetic mastery in this stereometrization of life. To the extent to which we become conscious of the lack of all deeper tension between organic life and its abstract elaboration in all the Egyptian manifestations of form, our admiration is tempered to a cold respect. It is typical that even in the case of the sculpture also the same doubts arise as with the mass of the columns, the question, namely, for what point of view it is really intended in its artistic aspect. Is a relief-like completeness as seen from the front the only consideration, thus compelling the beholder to take his stand before the front of the column and to read the structure of its form only from this ideal point of view, or is the weight of its cubic



25. ANIMAL-RELIEFS FROM THEBES

forcibleness so great that the beholder feels himself required to step back from the various fronts in order to obtain an insight into the artist's way of thinking? In other words, is the decisive factor the geometricalism of the individual planes and, of course, especially the geometricalism of the side presented to the view, or the cubism of the form in its entirety? Ludwig Curtius answers that this is a matter of indifference when he says: " For the whole, in its interdependence, it is primarily the cubic character of the object seen which lays down the law, for the modelling of details, it is the surface." [77] Here again therefore we have a naked juxtaposition of two attitudes of artistic thought between which an organic mediation can be imagined only with difficulty. It would be impossible to think of any form of artistic language varying without antagonism between a strongly cubic and a strongly plane conception. And it is absence of antagonism which is precisely characteristic of Egyptian sculpture. For this reason one is tempted to assume that the cubic was here given a feeling-accent in quite a different direction from what we are inclined to assume in compliance with the conditions imposed by our own conceptions. We cannot help being inclined to look upon cubic three-dimensionality as the great magician conjuring up cubic space and therefore true vital space. May we apply this view to the Egyptian case, in which the separate development in relief of every side—" there are four separate aspects of the figure worked into one another, as there are four sides of a die, and each of them is worked in calculated relief " [78]—operates expressly against the conception of the principle of cubic formation and actually abolishes it? In this Egyptian case, may it perhaps be that the cubic is not a category of artistic observation and presentation at all but something else, lying apart from the sensuality of art and belonging to quite another world of sensation? In other words, is not this cubic quality here perhaps only a material factor and not an artistic factor in the sense of a definite logic of form? Is it not perhaps merely quantity and not quality? The more one ponders over the paradox of all Egyptian art, the stronger becomes one's suspicion that the lavish show of cubic actuality must be interpreted otherwise than heretofore, namely, as simply an exponent of material durability, of unlimited material security of substance, of materiality giving confidence to the touch (Riegl), an exponent therefore of practical necessities. These practical necessities are bound up with a

background of religious ideas, in so far as the indestructibility of the statue is the security for the spirit of the departed always being able to return to it as to a stronghold; but this makes no difference to the fact that the train of artistic thought itself was not inspired by this cubic quality, not fertilized by it, but accepted it as something on other grounds inevitable and worked it in a practical manner into its artistic reckoning. In exactly the same way it worked its literal acuteness of observation—which indeed was also partly determined by religious considerations—into its procedure of abstract formation. It would be untrue to claim for the Egyptian, as the author himself has done on a former occasion, a feeling for " the awe-inspiring nature of the cubic," and to assume that he overcame it by giving a geometrical form to his planes. This would be to introduce into the Egyptian's feeling for life a dramatic element utterly at variance with our present sobered conception. There is nothing dramatic in the Egyptian process of form-creation, but only an unimpeded application of a definite rationality of formation to every kind of artistic object. When once three-dimensionality has been introduced into the artistic reckoning through external material necessities in the point of vision, the utmost possible transposition into stereometrical definition of form is the inevitable mode of transformation adopted under these conditions by the Egyptian in his rational conception of form. And this takes place with such sureness and purity, and with such a fully matured feeling for touch, that this consistent stylistic interadjustment of the utmost literal adherence to nature, the utmost material imposingness, and the utmost clarity of abstract stereometrical impress has resulted in artistic creations with a stamp of perfect and unproblematic finality. We ought not therefore to call in question the perfection attained by this combination, but this does not exclude the possibility of taking into reckoning the individual factors of this combination and granting their inner heterogeneousness. Yet it is the true secret of Egyptian culture that it concealed all its heterogeneous and irreconcilable features beneath its external effect of unity and definiteness of style to such an extent that even the most absurd combination worked with the force of conviction upon posterity and quelled all criticism. Sureness always convinces, even if, as in the Egyptian case, it is only a phenomenon that goes with absolute insensibility to the inner contradictions involved. Anyone,

26. STATUE
Marseilles

27. STONE FIGURE OF A
BEARDED MAN

however, who, starting from the most decisive point, namely, criticism of Egyptian religious ideas, has been awakened out of the paralysis of uncritical admiration to which he fell a victim under the suggestion of this sureness, will extend his awakened faculties to the criticism of all other expressions of Egyptian culture also; and in doing so he will not halt in the presence of the supreme product of Egypt, its sculpture. Even the unparalleled sureness of style of Egyptian sculpture cannot take so high a place in the hierarchy of values of the art of mankind as we believed; in the sculpture also there cannot in these latter days fail to be found that element of matter-of-fact realism, of Americanism, which, undeterred by the contradictions of natural existence, fines down its vital feeling, in an artificial superstructure of conventions, to a neutral uniformity, thereby introducing into its attitude towards existence an unnatural repose and constancy. It was not a sublime, transcendental attitude towards life which found a stone embodiment in this statuesque rigidity, but a wholly unfeeling and untranscendental aloofness from life. These stones speak to us not of a gigantic subjugation of life, but of a neutral, artificial withdrawal beyond life and its natural transcience. The mummification of life has never been regarded as something of high religious worth; just as little is a stereometric petrifaction of life something which is in all circumstances of high artistic value. Both have the taint of an artificial procedure, and that is not the same as an artistic procedure. In short, to the extent to which we give up seeing, in the Egyptian view of God and the universe, the ultimate conclusion of profound metaphysical thought, we shall also cease to see in the stereometrical formulation of Egyptian sculpture the last word of artistic wisdom and sublimity. We shall rather have occasion here also to substitute for the word " wisdom " the metaphysically less weighty word " rationality." In one way or another, we have to decide here also the question of sense of depth or sense of extension, and it is precisely the sculpture which puts this question to us quite literally, in the very ambiguity of its position between cubism and geometricalism. We have already given the answer by estimating cubism not as a sense of depth, but as a dead materialism determined by practical conditions, and by seeing in its stereometrical formation nothing but a levelling down and neutralization of sensibility to plastic depth. In any case we must add that

Egyptian sculpture, specially in the early period, when influences of the most diverse ethnological tincture are still living, is not so uniform that a judgment of so generalizing a nature could not fail to reveal itself as unjust in the presence of many an individual work. But here we are concerned only with the official average of Egyptian sculpture and the form of the manifestation in which it has most deeply stamped its impress upon posterity. Every art sparkles with many aspects when we look at it more closely: a comprehensive judgment can only pause at the aspect which, through the measure of its enduring predominance in impression and in recollection, proves itself to have representative validity.

IV

In a comprehensive view of the subject of our investigations sculpture called for only a passing glance. Architecture is the true focus of our survey. But if it is the question of *spatial* sensibility which now becomes acute, it was necessary as a prelude to raise the question of *plastic* sensibility. We admit that all the foregoing amplifications were only byeways leading up to the problem which stands at the centre of our perceptual interest, namely, the problem of the history of the genesis of space. This history has two chapters, a practical one, beginning at the moment in which need brings about the construction of the first primitive huts and tents, and an artistic, which is concerned with the existence of space in quite a different manner, and which begins very much later. The question we have to ask is whether this latter chapter begins already in the monumental buildings of Egypt.

We must not forget to draw attention at the outset to the fact that this question was put for the very first time and set on a fruitful basis of discussion by the memorable academic controversy, which took place twenty years ago, between Alois Riegl [79] and August Schmarsow.[80]

We repeat our question in a more precise form: did the Egyptians in planning their temples and palaces start from the conscious or subconscious desire to create an artistically independent space-impression? Thus we are concerned not with the question of the creation of artistically independent *spaces*, but of the creation of artistically independent *space-impressions*; in other words, we have to ask whether, in the conception of the Egyptian as an architect or as a beholder of architecture, an independent consciousness of space was alive which sought for architectural expression; or whether space was here only something present in a practical sense, existing even before any artistic accentuation through an independently trained space-sensibility.

Following the procedure of Riegl we approach first of all the exterior structure and ask of it whether anything in its formation betrays the fact that it is the shell of an inner kernel of felt space-sensibilities (figs. 8 and

21). The answer is bluntly in the negative. In so far as the great external wall enclosing the complex of buildings with its escarpment-walls is articulated—and it is articulated in the form of a graduation with several breaks—this articulation by no means reflects the inner development of the ground-plan, but only the structure of the site imposed upon the building by its occasion. This outer wall is actually only an enclosing wall, and tells us nothing in its neutral smoothness of what is taking place behind it in the way of inner articulation. No wall could possibly be less helpful than this is to an insight into the ideas of the inner articulation of the building. If the pyramid did not tower above it, anyone viewing the wall from outside could have no means of divining what lies hidden behind its smooth lifeless surface. It silently performs the service of the external fencing and safeguarding of the complex of buildings. A garden wall could not be more neutral. In spite of this it was inevitable that we with our modern vision should introduce into this neutral objectivity a certain expression, that we should, so to speak, unjustifiably dramatize this neutrality and read into it a grandiose and profound reticence and disdain. What is actually the dumbness of these walls was converted under our eyes into the dignity of a holy silence. A purposive idea carried out on a grand scale was interpreted by us as a great architectonic holding of the breath and as a dumb gesture averting all the life surging upon it from without which might disturb the sacred solemnity of atmosphere of which the enclosed interior is the scene. And it would appear to our historic fancy as a sacrilege if any one were to dare to attribute to this wall no more expression than to the unbroken wall enclosing the buildings of an American factory.

Our survey confines itself for the moment to the typical example of the early period (5th Dynasty), the Temple of the Dead of Sahu-ra, which, as the excavator himself declared, will always remain the only example to be adduced in demonstration for purposes of instruction.[81]

The strong enclosing wall of this extensive architectural group has an opening on one side only, namely, on the side of the entrance to the gate-building stretching down to the Nile bank, where the funeral cortège, landing from boats, obtained access to the inner temple. (The subsidiary entrance placed on the south side of the gate-building, like that at the chief temple leading to the pyramid of the queen, does not belong to the

architectural idea in its pure form, and may for that reason here be left out of account.)

We regarded the group of temple buildings to begin with from without, with a view to discovering whether a kind of reverberation of the manner in which the interior spaces are formed made its way to the exterior; the answer was " No." Let us now look at it from above, for which purpose Borchardt's model viewed as a whole gives a good opportunity. Here again the penetrating eye finds its view strictly limited. Flat roof joins on to flat roof to form in the entire structure a common terrace through the shell of which not a pulse-beat makes its way from the life of the inner space. Articulation is afforded only by the heightened walls which mark off the temple-system proper from the subsidiary buildings, and by the rises of level which divide the edge of the open pillared court and the reinforced roof of the " Inmost Temple " from the smooth upper surfaces. If we compare the impression offered by this general view with what is revealed to us, by the drawing of the plan (p. 51), of the multiplicity of compartments hidden beneath this monotonous stone covering, we become acquainted with the fact that the whole exterior structure betrays at bottom as little of the existence of interior spaces as does the pyramid. For in the case of the pyramid also it is only by empirical knowledge that we are acquainted with the existence of a series of internal chambers, whilst the impression given by the exterior repels all idea of their existence. Certainly the relationship between architectural mass and internal compartments is not so far withdrawn from all comparison and connection in the temple as in the pyramid, but something of the strangely abrupt relationship between the two components in the architectural process makes itself felt in the latter case also. In both instances it is as if the spaces actually present in the architectural mass were enclosed as in a rigid impenetrable casing. The architectural mass shuts in, like a strong prison, the life of articulated space in its interior. A glance at the ground-plan has the effect not of the unshrouding of a body extended beneath the covering of the rigid, outward-directed artificial architectural clothing, but of the disclosure of the entrails of a structural mass. In this way the exterior view shows us only a rigid dress, the ground-plan only the entrails of a series of internal spaces; anything intermediate in the way of a real body is lacking. A further

reflection will perhaps throw light on what this bold comparison is intended to indicate concerning the specifically Egyptian attitude towards the architectural problem. We can still deduce from the high and monumental artistic form of the pyramid its original idea, namely, that of setting up an artificial mountain, offering a substitute for the hill of natural formation into the interior of which man in a state of nature bored shafts to provide his dead with the safest and most sheltered resting-place possible. Even the most exalted pyramid conceals this core of subterranean mole-burrows. But the shifting sandy soil of the desert requires that this erstwhile subterranean structural idea should rise to the surface in the stage of its translation into artificial architectural form. Thus the entire series of temples leading up to the pyramid also retains something subterranean about it, even though as a matter of fact its development takes place above ground. Just as burrows and shafts and galleries are driven into the outer slopes of a mountain, until they reach their goal in its middle axis, so also all the channel-like compartments of the processional temple burrow, as it were, into a pre-existing architectural mass until they come to the centre of the ritual act.

Whether the Temple of the Dead by the Pyramid of Amenemhat III at Hawara was really the building called by the Greeks the Labyrinth may be left an open question, but no one who observes them can fail to notice that all Egyptian temple-plans have something of the character of a highly systematized and rationalized labyrinth.

It is extraordinarily important for the question of the ideal spatial quality of Egyptian architecture to obtain a clear notion of this atavistic fundamental character, with its after effects, in the process of thought by which the architecture was created. For we have so much difficulty in recognizing this character because the form taken by it in the art of architecture is in the strongest contrast, as expression, to its primitive antecedents of natural growth. But are we not here once again in the presence of that eternal Egyptian polarity with which we have already become acquainted in many forms, that immediate juxtaposition of the prehistoric basic substance of conceptions and their surface worked over with a rationality having the force and rigidity of a formula, speaking an entirely different accent? Is it not the same as in the sphinx-monsters with their

28. FIGURE OF TETU IN BLACK STONE

Berlin

strongly mathematical character, the same as in the swamp thicket, monumentalized into a forest of gigantic columns, or the whole world of religious ideas by which a soil of the lushest religious luxuriance was theologized into an outwardly smooth and very self-conscious body of dogmas? There is always the inner contradiction which only the sureness of exterior form reduces peremptorily to silence for the consciousness of posterity.

It is therefore part of an insight into the essence of the architectonic procedure of the Egyptian that we must conceive his temple-systems as great forms assumed by the crystallization of original subterranean shaft-systems, monumentalized in stone and a powerful architecture. The illumination, reduced to the barest necessary measure, which fell upon the interior through slits beneath the roof hardly visible from outside—the typical shaft-illumination, from above—must have left the visitor to the temple in complete uncertainty as to whether he was above ground or below.

It is obvious that in this unconscious atavism of the architectonic imagination there can be no question of an urge to free development of space. Space with the Egyptian never develops an ideal independence of its own, but remains always essentially a hole in the ground, that is, it has the effect always of being wrested from an encompassing mass, whether it be the natural mass of the ground or the form in which it is artificially imitated, namely, architectural mass. " The separate spaces are reserved like hollows formed in the massive body of masonry." [82] A glance at the ground-plan shows more clearly than any number of words how the spaces do not dare to breathe freely, but only venture to unfold themselves in narrow confinement into a systematic series of numerous and comparatively small individual compartments. The impression remains of a mining engineer having, with the utmost rationality of constructive technique, translated his recollections of systems of subterranean galleries into representative stone monumentality. Borchardt once likens a certain spot in the ground-plan, by a comparison appropriate to the land of the Nile, to a distributor which conducts the volume of water of a canal through its sluices into the various strips of land; [83] in this comparison we have the same inevitable idea of highly cultivated engineering systems which also forces itself upon us in the presence of

this architectonic procedure. There is one part which recalls in the most obvious manner the tunnellings of a mole transferred as it were above ground and translated into terms of architectural rationalism; this is the connecting corridor between the gate-building and the temple proper. The extreme instance of this strange type of passage is well known, in the Temple of the Dead of Chephren, where this walled bowel of the earth is half a kilometre long. The excavator rightly asks:[84] "Would the Greeks and Romans also have provided access to a temple of the dead through such a long dark passage? Would they not rather have laid out a magnificent *via sacra*, an open roadway leaving the eye free to look round in every direction?" Many reasons may have contributed to prevent the Egyptians from doing this, but some of them lie certainly in that architectonic subconsciousness in which recollections of underground working were still secretly alive. One must never forget Egyptian traditionalism, which with its conservative clinging to survivals from the dawn of history only provided the proof of its powerlessness to address itself to new creations, and which may thus also not have been averse in architecture to retaining in its buildings above ground the visualized conception of subterranean systems.

To what extent the funeral rite itself, which obtained its architectural form in these processional temples, was still unconsciously dependent upon the original form of the subterranean burial-places, which allowed of movement only in the direction of depth and never laterally, is a difficult special question which must merely be thrown out in passing, because in it we are concerned with ultimate imponderables susceptible of no decision by demonstration. In any case every movement through subterranean spaces immediately assumes the form of a procession, because the narrowness of the spaces imposed by necessity only suffers a slow, procession-like progress into the inner depths of the mountain. It might therefore nevertheless be the case that the system of spaces in the temple of the dead did not signify an accommodation to the idea of a procession, but on the contrary that this idea represented an adaptation, subsequently taking effect, to a special emergency-case of the possibilities of space-development. Of course all these explorations of the secret connection between the language of architectural feeling and atavistic after-influences from subterranean structures must only be taken as

29. FRAGMENT OF A STATUE IN GREEN STONE
XXVI Dynasty

expressing something quite general as to early Egyptian temple-architecture. It is only the undertone of architectural language which, when we listen more attentively to it, conjures up the reminiscences. Above all, we must take into consideration the fact that at an early date influences upon the formation of the ground-plan of the temples supervene from quite another direction—to be precise, from the building of private houses. Their freer, unhindered development invades the temple formation with various motives, such as pillared vestibules, an open court, wide halls and others, and constructs with them a counterpoise to the chthonic aboriginal spirit. In the measure in which finally the pyramid systems disappear, and temples of the dead fall into the background in their significance for the history of architecture as compared with the temples of the gods and monumental palace-buildings, this counter-influence from the world of free above-ground construction naturally gains strength until it becomes fully predominant. The utmost that happens is that reminiscences of the compactness of subterranean structure continue to take effect in the preference for the enclosed mass in the whole architectural phenomenon, just as indeed, as regards form also, quite a number of stereotype elements are only to be understood from the tradition of earth- and loam-working continued in stone. Mass and surface—to these all Egyptian constructive sense is confined.

And what of space? In this progressing development does it now come to its own artistic and ideal rights? After what has been said in the foregoing pages it is no longer necessary to mention that in the narrow shaft-like spaces of the old temples of the dead there could be no question of a spatial quality of this kind independent in idea. But now that the dimensions of the space-groupings widen out, and a break is made with the system of narrow mole-burrows, great equivalent lateral spaces stemming with equally powerful effect the stepped longitudinal spaces (Temple of Chons, at Karnak, etc.), does the soul of space awaken, does space become more than an opening for movement effected in the mass of masonry? Do we here at last arrive at that for which the reality of spaces is the first premiss, namely, an artistically accented impression of spatial potency?

We know the answer of Riegl; he calls space-shyness one of the most important characteristic traits of Egyptian architecture, and sees in the

struggle between artistic space-shyness and the practical demand for space the true problem of this architecture. " In the early period the space required by utilitarian purposes was split up into a series of dark chambers, within the narrow limits of which moreover an artistic impression of space could not arise. For certain ceremonies, however, it was not possible to make do with these conditions, indeed, great spaces were needed. These were at one time given the form of open courts, in which therefore the lack of an upward termination meant lack of the complete character of an interior space; moreover, rows of columns were set in front of the wall-surfaces enclosing the sides in order to present to the eyes of the beholder tangible isolated forms. Alongside these courts, however, there were completely enclosed colossal halls with a fixed ceiling; these with their definite limits could not but have called forth an impression of space, and thereby have caused the utmost displeasure to the Egyptian. Hence the halls are densely filled with a forest of columns at short distances from one another, supporting the ceiling in such a manner that all the surfaces which would not have failed to have an effect in a spatial sense were cut up and portioned out; by this means the impression of space was repelled, in spite of the considerable extension—indeed it was annihilated and the impression of isolated forms (the columns) was forced upon the eye instead of it." [85] We may add also another citation: " A thicket of columns, a grove of pillars, shutting out all effect of space—and what columns, what pillars! Ever shooting upwards afresh, thronging in dense series, again and again, to the furthest depths. The conception of open space gropes its way between them, soon to be choked; the bulging column pitilessly intrudes itself. Here and there paths open out in the thicket, corridor-like widenings of the interspace between the pillars, processional ways leading to chapels, indications of free space, so far as the requirements of use made them inevitable—and understanding of free space was lacking." [86]

There can therefore be no doubt as to the fact that an independent feeling for space counts for nothing in these Egyptian buildings. The only thing about which there can be any question is the form of significance of this fact of experience. Let us exclude at once the possibility of a significance simply of a technically rational and practical kind, for the thickness and strength of the columns is out of all relation to the force

they are structurally required to put forth. It is not the law of practical necessity that these columns obey when, with their massive corporeality of appearance and the dense sequence in which they crowd upon one another, they repel every effort to provide free space; the true impelling element must be a factor from the realm of ideas. But where are we to find means of explaining it?

The problem we touch upon here may be called a truly modern one. Only for men of to-day could the question of the essence of spatiality become one of such actuality for the history of the spirit. We moderns were the first who could find in this any problem at all. In this connection Spengler actually sums up modern self-consciousness, inasmuch as he sets at the very centre of his morphology of culture the various forms under which space is regarded and conceived. So far as the artistic aspect of space is concerned, he is doubtless right when he comprehends space not in the Kantian sense as an absolute and therefore constant apriori of the whole outlook of man, but as a creative act of sensibility, as variable as the different types of culture whose uniqueness and restrictions give it birth. Mathematical space remains equal, at least within the limits of validity of Euclidean geometry, but not space as a form of the outlook and experience of the artist. The practice of space-perception is something other than the theory of space-knowledge. The life-history of this practice of space-perception is laid down in its most readily recognizable form in art. It is thus no accident that the actualization of this problem of the varying perception of space started in the first place from the history of art, and that art-history may therefore pride itself on having for the first time grasped and worked at the central problem of the morphology of modern culture in all the depth of its significance. Moreover, it was the analysis of this very problem as much as anything which forced upon art-history a recognition of the fact that nothing more is to be made of a conception of the processes of the development of art history as reflecting a development of artistic ability; the real problem, that of the deduction of this fluctuating ability from deeper conditions connected organically with the universal structure of the period of art in question, is only to be found underlying this conception, and these are facts of which the recognition has been forced upon art-history not least by getting to grips with this very problem concerning space-perception. In short, art-history has

done most important preparatory work for the morphology of culture. The name of Alois Riegl should here be recorded anew with the deepest acknowledgments. Not with his solutions but assuredly with his propositions he prepared the foundations for all further discussion.

It was an act of modern self-knowledge to see the determining element of our entire perspective of existence in the endlessness of space. But in recognizing in this form of space-perception the form essentially belonging to us we recognized also of necessity the historically conditioned and limited nature of this our form of experience. We grasped the fact that this, to us obvious and absolute-seeming, form of space-conception was bound up in the closest possible manner with our specific form of spiritual and intellectual existence, and was therefore relative. The more intensely this relationship of correspondence was felt, the more did this act of self-knowledge become a liberator from that historical restriction of vision which naively and as a matter of course postulated for all other cultures and their artistic embodiments our own form of space-experience.

The working out in art-history of this widening of outlook found more intelligible expression by making the subject of investigation in a special manner *those* phenomena in the history of art which were recognizable as the pronounced counterpart of our view of space. Under these circumstances the strictest plane-art in the world, that of Egypt, provided the most profitable example. But in the interpretation of this limitation to the plane surface the deep-rooted conception of the power of space was unwittingly adhered to, inasmuch as nothing was seen in this spell cast by the plane surface but a magnificent exorcism of space in the form of the strictest negation and suppression of it. As what is non-existent cannot be suppressed, the existence of a space-consciousness similar to our own was therefore still tacitly recognized all the time in this interpretation. Only negative indications were acquired, so to speak. Expressions such as " the struggle with space," or " space-shyness " or " space-fear," clearly proclaimed in their merely antithetical occurrence this unconscious enslavement to the conception of an unchanging consciousness of space. The complete indifference of the Egyptian attitude towards the spatial potency of existence was thus converted into a carefully considered renunciation of the space-factor, and the setting of this conscious renunciation against the deepest of metaphysical backgrounds was in agree-

ment with the tradition of Egyptian profundity and wisdom. (The author is here speaking of his own earlier publications.)

To-day, however, the question must be put in this way: " If there is an Egyptian metaphysic of the utmost profundity, then this attitude of aloofness towards the spatial element may be an expression of the deepest metaphysical conviction; but if there is not, and if the metaphysical efforts of the Egyptian are as shallow as more recent Egyptology gives us to understand, there can be no anti-space metaphysic either, nor may this negative attitude towards space be metaphysically dramatized and glorified. But then there remains only the explanation that in the Egyptian the organ for the language of spatial values was as yet absolutely undeveloped, and that for him it was no effort not to speak in this language.

Obviously such an insensitive neutrality towards the expression-values of the spatial arises in any case only when the sphere of expression belonging to the essence of space is seen to lie in the dynamic. Statics of space is a term which, taken strictly, contradicts itself. Only the boundaries of space come within the legitimate sphere of statics, but what is enclosed by these boundaries, if it develops a life of its own at all, can develop only a life dynamically comprehensible. Why does our feeling involuntarily connect the conception of living space with vaulted space (and in this, historical experience by no means contradicts our feeling)? It is because the peculiar dynamic nature of spatial values is most visibly taken into account in the labile curve of the vaulting. The whole history of the architectonic formation of space is misunderstood, if the history of the forms by which space is confined is treated as being essentially the same as the history of the growth of space. No, the empirical history of forms of space is completely subordinate to the antinomy of these two factors. It is rather a bold thing to say, but ideal space, that is, space in which the dynamic language of expression of the spatial would be able to take effect without contradiction, would only be space enclosed within the form of a globe. This would be the form in which the innate adaptability, the innate dynamic of the spatial world would have created for itself its most complete architectonic reflex; this would be the form in which the vibrations of space—and space is nothing but vibration—would have been brought to their last purest reverberation, and thereby to an

ideal state of repose. It would be musically perfect space, and any perfection of space cannot be explained otherwise than by musical analogies.

This kind of space is, of course, only theoretically conceivable. Practically it can never become actuality, because there is in fact no architectonic formation without the antinomy mentioned, which confronts the peculiar requirements of space with the peculiar requirements of man, for whom the space is destined. And these peculiar human requirements force the formation of space into processes of thought far distant from the impulse to spontaneous space-formation. With man and the static limitations of his walking and standing the law of the static is also introduced into a world which should properly live on the dynamic plane only. With the level of the floor, in practice unavoidable, any ideal formation of space proceeding from the will of space itself is already rendered for ever impossible. But with this consideration of the static nature of the user of space is associated a second consideration, namely, that of the most elementary requirement of building technique, which is naturally first and foremost tectonic, and is therefore also subordinate to the absolute law of the static. If space is to be architecturally confined at all, this can only be in the forms of structural statics. In other words, just as the level of the floor takes account of the statics of human existence, so the lateral and upward delimitations of space take into account not only the statics of *human* restrictedness, but also the statics of *technical* restrictedness. In space rectangularly enclosed therefore the spatial as such has no rights of its own at all, but only obeys the requirements arising out of the elementary restrictedness of man and of his technique of construction. Now history teaches us that this form of space is by far the most widely distributed, and that vaulted spaces or indeed spaces with bowed, convex side-walls, baroque spaces in which the immanent music of the vibrations of space might be brought to their last reverberations, fall by comparison into the background as sporadic isolated cases. What follows from this? It follows that the feeling for the specifically spatial is by no means a matter of course but an exception, something quite peculiar, appearing on the scene only under definite conditions. Only under quite definite conditions does the organ for the essence of the spatial awake and assert itself, and that in conscious strife with the stronger opposing power of the static. The average form of space-

formation, however, knows nothing of this peculiar demand of the spatial, but harmonizes it only to the human. In it space is the result of delimitations of space and not the other way round, as must have been the case with an acceptance of the independent rights of the spatial. Here the musical soul belonging to space lies buried as in slumber in its hard static delimitations, and only under special circumstances in the history of evolution does it awake and seek to make its innate gentle strains effective against the hard encasement of space.

What are these special circumstances? When does the organ for the individual language of the spatial awake? Only when the contours of world-feeling itself have renounced their hard staticism, only when this world-feeling has resolved itself into flowing vibrations. Only a world-feeling which comprehends all cosmic and earthly happening out and out as dynamic happening will strive after the spatial reflex of its form of experience. Space-feeling is thus the characteristic form of a definite life-feeling, and, to come directly to the point, of a life-feeling occurring only in late periods of culture. It may be admitted that, just as the twilight which dissolves all contours comes not only at the end of the day but also at the beginning, so also the dim preliminary stage of human consciousness brings on a blurring of all conceptions in the indefinite and the incomprehensible, which in this lack of consistency seemingly borders on the dissolution afresh, in human consciousness in its late manifestations, of all fixed conceptions. To treat this early dynamism, however, vibrating with chaotic confusion, as if it were the same as the stage of the highly-developed sublimation of all subjection to the body in a transcendentalism which resolves all corporeality, would mean identifying the dim feeling for space which is developed in the cultures of cavemen with all the forms of the most advanced space-magic and space-mysticism which produced their architectural counterpart in the cathedrals and mosques of later times. It is true that in these dim caverns there slumbers an unarticulated feeling for space which is in some way the counterpart of the vague panic with which primitive man stares into the world of the enigmatic disconnectedness of all phenomena, but our examination is concerned not with these unarticulated space-feelings, but with the growth of articulated space-structure consummated in monumental architecture, and specifically as a manifestation correlative to the development of an articulated

metaphysic. Here we have to do not with the comprehension by history of profoundly confused space-clashings, but with the comprehension of phenomena of evolution leading to artificially fashioned space.

Feeling for space, we have said, is the form corresponding to a feeling for life. All the corporeality, all the literalness of life must have lost its stark nearness in a metaphysical consciousness of distance in order to allow the noiseless *imponderabile* of the effects of space to become the object of the artistic shaping of impressions. Space is always only a form of the relationship of the ego to the surrounding world. Only where the physical character of the corporeal and of what constitutes the ego, with its pretensions to absoluteness, becomes relative through a process of rendering metaphysical that which lives incomprehensibly between things and is more than an interspace measurable by corporeal standards—universal space, that is, vaulting over the whole corporeal world as something higher than it,—only in these circumstances can the organ-tones of the spatial become the motives of architectonic configuration. Space is indeed the expression of this process by which the subjective feeling for existence is rendered relative and metaphysical. It can only become a vital idea where all objectivism has lost its rights. Like every pictorial embodiment, it is the result of a distant view, of a withdrawing from things in order to see them in their atmospheric context, whether it be the actual atmosphere or the atmosphere of metaphysical instinct. What distinguishes modern pictorial spatial development from the form we have in view, is precisely that its pictorial spatial solution is only effected by the actual atmosphere and not by atmosphere in the metaphysical sense, comprehensible only by religion. We are here speaking of space only in so far as it signifies something spiritual.

We will return to our point of departure in Egypt. " Can we think of space-poems as proceeding at all out of the Egyptian mind? The spiritual foundation of all architectonic formation, the feeling for space looked upon from within, is all too painfully lacking." [87] More than this is lacking—any kind of feeling for inwardness is lacking. There is a lack of the fluid quality of a religious consciousness, resolving all the contours of reality and giving to them a supersensuous ambient. In short, there is a lack of soul-space in all experience—soul-space which first gives actual space the tinge of a special experience. In Egypt the facts of the

religious life are there naked and apart, as if in a hollow space filled with no actual atmosphere. They are united not by a spiritual association but by an association intellectually imposed, which has created its corresponding form in the superficiality of a ritual of formulas. If we wished to give a schematic view of the morphology of the religious state of Egypt, the result would be a structure absolutely resembling Egyptian sculpture in its composition, namely, a mass of coarsely sensuous and naturalistic conceptions outwardly stylized in a thin, graphically superficial sense. Vague mass and over-stylization of an intellectual rationalistic order in thin, stereotyped relief design—this is also the schematic form of the religious complex. Here also no air from a higher surrounding world makes its way into this associated play of mass and surface, enlivening and enriching it by pictorial interplay. Into this religious association also shadows, those interlopers of the metaphysical-spatial, are not suffered to enter. Mass and surface—*tertium non datur*. And this *tertium* is just the pictorial-spatial element in which the atmosphere of a spiritual-metaphysical association of all things and all events becomes condensed. It is the victory of the uniting ambient over the isolation of lifeless objectivism which is manifested in this penetration of space into all the forms of religious consciousness. This space, however, this space of mental spiritual experience, can be brought forth only by religious fecundity, by a factor, that is, which had long since died out in the thin air of the oasis-like high culture of the Egyptian intellectual world. The only possibility left over was the intellectualization of that sediment of massive religious conceptions which from the earliest times still continued to form a layer upon the soil of the cultural formation, and was so to speak reverently mummified as a remnant of a living religious impulse. The result was a rationalized occultism not unlike the occultism of architectural space which, as we have seen, is the peculiar form of the Egyptian embodiment of space, and in the dark, narrow corridors and halls of which reminiscences of subterranean earth-workings had been preserved into the Egyptian present. In other words, space plays a part in Egyptian architecture only as a surviving rudiment of a primeval magic of space and caverns; as a problem of development for the future it is not taken into consideration. Had this not been so, a new element of the cultural spiritualization of all life could not fail to have supervened,

and for this there was no place in the pragmatism and Americanism of Egypt.

The Egyptian therefore was not hostile, but neutral and indifferent to space. The spatial had no existence at all as an artistic potential in his intellectual and artistic consciousness. His temperament was not super-spatial but pre-spatial. His oasis-forced culture was spaceless as it was soulless and without destiny. In architecture it knew only delimitations of space, containers of space, not space-inwardness. Just as its relief designs were without the depths given by shadows, so its forms of architecture were without depths of space. The third dimension, the peculiar dimension of life-tension, now came to be felt as quantity only, not as quality. Then how could space, that element of expansion towards depth, liberated from all bodily forms, make itself consciously felt as an independent quality? No, the hour in which higher space-sensibility was born does not fall within the limits of Egyptian monumental architecture, and this because the mental constitution of the Egyptian lacked the dimension of true metaphysical depths, because creative *eros* was wanting in its thin-blooded sobriety. On an earlier page we established the lack of all higher daemonology; then how could the deepest of all daemonies, the daemony of the spatial, come into its own?

Rigidity, inhuman, non-human rigidity, is the mark of this culture. How could there be a place in it for the ever-fluid quality of space? To be sure, rigidity can also be something of high worth, but this depends on the amount of vitality, that is, of fluidity, overcome in this rigidity. There is a daemonic rigidity, a rigidity in which " man's best part to shudder," has been brought to an exalted subjugation and to an exalted state of rest, and there is a jejune sober rigidity of which the necessary condition is a state of inward non-participation in all the deeper thrills of life. It seems to me that the rigidity of Egypt belongs to the latter realm. It admits no being above all becoming, but a being either before or after all becoming, in any case unaffected by becoming. Space is becoming, eternal becoming, endless melody of becoming—victory over everything that is bound up with mere being, the opening up of what lies eternally beyond all corporeality. Space is metaphysical consciousness. In the Egyptian, just as metaphysical consciousness was lacking, so also was all spatial consciousness lacking.

POSTSCRIPT

It is already some years since I wrote down these thoughts. Apart from other reasons my hesitation in publishing them was the result of the fact that I knew too well how much, with the rigidly organized form of our scientific hierarchy, the whole attitude of thought and enquiry here assumed in the questions put and my attempts to answer them would encounter fundamental aversion.

The mere fact that a writer on the history of recent art here ventures far beyond his own province and takes up a critical position with regard to a special sphere of ancient art, will arouse mistrust and call forth the ever-ready reproach of dilettantism. This reproach misses its aim with me, because I obviously make no sort of pretension to enter into competition with the professional Egyptologist. Here I speak rather as any one might for whom the problem of artistic form as such, in its causal connection with the various forms of historical types in human history, has been for decades the object of his endeavours after knowledge, and who takes the liberty of investigating a great example of such historical types, in its operation upon the history of form, even where this example lies outside his habitual range as a specialist, and consequently allows him only an inadequate competence of judgment. Even so, I have spared no pains, so far as lies within my power and aptitude, in searching out in Egyptological literature evidence in support of my view. Yet of this I am certain: my point of departure is not Egyptological experience, but the psychology of form as such, and therefore the expert Egyptologist will surely be able to point out many a mistake of vision and many an error.

But if this is the case, will the value of this enquiry thereby be forthwith rendered questionable? Though it may be pointed out that much is incorrect, hasty in generalization and one-sided in outlook, is it therefore out of the question that there is still in the fundamental view something correct, capable of taking us farther in the knowledge of the phenomena in question? This is what I wished to aim at in the words with which in a spirit of resignation I began this postscript; in our strict scientific hierarchy

there is lacking the understanding of the valuable rôle that free experiment in thought and conception can play in the economy of our endeavours to attain historical knowledge. Fixed norms of what alone is scientific are immediately to hand, relentlessly to condemn these bold ventures of heuristic experiment. The attitude is not understood of one who, admitting its purely experimental character, carries through with much trouble and discrimination a new aspect of any problematical region, and now expects those who are scientifically interested to come to an understanding as to the possible sense and utility of this experiment. No, the experiment is immediately rejected as such, and a calm, unprejudiced hearing is denied to it, for the very reason that others do not share the author's conviction that the soil out of which our historical judgment is formed must be constantly ploughed up afresh for the germs of a new fertility to develop.

To begin with, the external form in which this experiment is presented will not be rightly understood. This form, that is to say, has a definiteness apparently in contradiction to the experimental character which has been presumed for it. I appear to say with all emphasis: " Thus it is "—and yet this is but the unavoidable form in which I advance the question " Can it be so? " This question in the form of an assertion cannot be avoided. Only by working out in all definiteness the idea to be set up by this experiment for discussion—which can only be done in this assertion-form—can I make it with certainty tangible for discussion. If I am asked whether I am firmly convinced of the correctness of the idea here sketched with such a show of certainty, I answer truthfully with a shrug of the shoulders, but this final doubt constitutes for me no counter-argument to compel me in the carrying through of the experiment to take up an attitude of certainty, because without such certainty no clear outline of the experimental idea can be presented.

But why make an experiment that consciously exposes itself to so many possibilities of being misunderstood? To this there can be only one answer—Because this idea which I here sketch out has developed itself in me in spite of all the doubt and opposition with which I have confronted it, and has become an independent living entity from which I can only set myself free by giving it utterance. I hope others may engage in discussion with it, just as I still constantly do myself. Publication of the

experiment means indeed for me nothing else but an invitation to participation in this discussion. I feel myself all the more impelled to this as I have a strong conviction that the rise of this ideal figure in me is no accident, but the hidden consequence of general transformations which our historical outlook and judgment are undergoing at this moment in evolution—and which urge one to put the question to which an answer is here attempted.

Too many cultures of import, lying aside from the high-road of a tradition of historical vision of all too simplifying a character, have entered of late upon our range of outlook to leave unaffected by them our view of the problem of culture as such, and to allow us to adhere calmly and obstinately to the old accentuations of essential values.

Now let me say this—those cultures which have been newly opened up to us, and of which we have traced the import in all their expressions, do not display to us anything like the completeness and certainty of Egyptian culture. What follows from this? Is it possible for this to mislead us as to their import? No, but here comes the really new fact—it *is* possible that we may be misled by this as to the value of that formal completeness and certainty exhibited by Egypt. This is the consequence which potentially opens up an entirely new field of vision. What we have estimated, in compliance with tradition, as something in all circumstances positive, becomes all at once in an unexpected manner problematical. It becomes problematical in the measure in which we—grown through wider possibilities of comparison more sensitive in our feeling for things of culture—in forming our judgment start rather from the degree of essential consistency in the culture in question than from the degree of its formal emphasis and convincing power.

This experiment then stands at a point which is thoroughly vital as regards the history of evolution, namely, the crossroads at which formal aesthetics and essential aesthetics are brought into adjustment. It is only the beginning of a necessary process which is concerned with the revision, in the sense of a more penetrating insight into essentials, of our habits of judgment which are based upon insight into the aesthetics of form.

What could be a more suitable starting-point for this process than the culture which like no other was capable, through the convincing power

of its sureness of form, of deceiving us as to the uncertain value of its essential background?

The science which deals with the modern insight into the essence of cultural events is called sociology. The possibility of differentiation newly opened up to us by this sociological method of treatment drives us also to new differentiations of our conception of the connection of essence and form. Where could an experimental test of this more differentiated comprehension of the connection be more apposite than in the case of the Egyptian problem, which as an extreme sociological exception offers the best and most fruitful field of investigation?

This is the position as regards the justification for my experiment. Everything depends upon its apparent arbitrariness proving to be at bottom a hidden necessity. Everything depends upon at least the raising of the question being found necessary and fruitful. Whether the answer I attempt to give is the right one is a secondary consideration, and will not be decided in a day. It is enough if the discussion begins.

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